THE WAVE OF BEAUTY
(SAUNDARYA LAHARI)

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Obeisence to Sri Mahadeva, Sri Sankara and the galaxy of our teachers !

The Saundarya Lahari (Flood of Beauty) is a devotional hymn *par excellence* ascribed to the great Advaitic teacher, Śrī Śaṁkara-Bhagavatpādācārya, combining in itself a hymn of devotional prayer, a Mantra Śāstra and a spiritual (meditative) mode of worship of the Supreme Being (tantra). As a hymn of praise, it is suited to the novice in spiritual exercise, as a mantra śāstra it fulfills the material and spiritual needs of the seeker and as a tantra—it elucidates a spiritual discipline, calculated to lead the aspirant to liberation. In short, it is an invaluable vehicle of devotion and meditation for achieving the Puruṣārthas, Dharma, Artha and Kāma leading eventually to the final beatitude (mokṣa),—the *summum bonum* of human exiṣtence.

The hymn, in one hundred verses in the Śikhariṇī metre (with three more added by some), extols in its first part of fortyone verses, known generally as the Wave of Bliss (Ānanda Laharī), the dynamic aspect of Brahman, as Śakti, Her potency, manifestations for worship, and the modes of meditation internally in the microcosm; the rest of the poem, an exquisite and delicious literary masterpiece, bristling with suggestion and devotion—(styled the Flood of Beauty—Saundarya Laharī) contains a magnificent exposition of the beauties of the charming form of the Divine Mother, from head to foot, with a concluding prayer for her gracious bounty.

Under the guidance and gracious blessings of His Holincss, the Periyaval of Kanchi, a humble attempt is made herein to explain, in brief, the purport of this great hymn, together with a rendering, in English, for the lay reader. The commentaries by learned and experienced upāsakas, in the earlier part of this volume, provide material for a more intensive and detailed understanding of the intricacies of Devi worship explained in this poem.

VERSE—1.

Paramesvara becomes capable of creating the Universe, only when united with Sakti (Thee), but otherwise (when not so joined with Thee), He is incapable of even a stir. How then could one, who has not acquired merit (Punya—in this and previous births) worship Thee, or at least praise Thee, who is adored even by Vishnu, Siva, Brahma and others ?

Śrī Śankara Bhagavatpāda commences the Ānandalaharī with the auspicious and pregnant expression, 'Śiva', providing therein a benedictory invocation to the Supreme Being.

The reference in this expression 'Śiva' is to Parameśvara, the transcendental, all-pervading, Supreme Parabrahman in his Niṣkala (static) aspect, described in the śrutis thus—"Not that which is conscious of the internal subjective world, not that which is conscious of the external world, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is a mass of consciousness, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor is it conscious. It is unseen by any sense-organ, not related to anything, incomprehensible by the mind, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, essentially of the self-alone, negation of all phenomena, the peaceful, all bliss and the non-dual." (Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, VII)

Śakti is the primordial energy latent in this undifferentiated, self-luminous all-pervading consciousness, which manifests itself to create the universe after the great deluge or dissolution (Mahāpralaya). This Sakti is not different from consciousness (*Cit*), their relation being one of inseparable concord (avinābhāva sambandha) as between fire and its burning capacity (dāhakaśakti), a subject (guṇin) and its attributes (gunāḥ) speech (vāk) and meaning (artha) etc. In other words, the one does not exist without the other; Śakti to create cannot exist without its possessor. The Sakti-bija comprising of 'a' and 'i' is essential in combination with 's' and 'v' for the formation of the name 'Śiva' to be articulated.

The stir (spanda) referred to in this verse is the desire to create and the manifestation of the static energy (Śakti) in its kinetic or dynamic aspect. At this stage, according to Āgama, Śakti becomes two-fold and functions as 'Citśakti' and māyā or jadaśakti, which evolve into the multitudinous animate and inanimate Universe. The following lines from the Sūta Samhitā Yajña (Chapter 13) are quoteworthy in this connection :—

'Cinmātraśraya māyāyāḥ saktyākāre dvijottamāh ;
Anupraviṣṭā yā samvinnirvikalpā svayamprabhā,
Sadākārā parānandā samśāyocchedakāriṇī ;
Sā Śivā paramādevī śivābhinnā śivamkarī.
Jagatkāraṇamāpannaḥ śivo yo muktisattamāḥ ;
Sā tasyāpi bhavecchaktiḥ tayā hīno nirarthakaḥ.

Obeisance or worship is three-fold;-bodily (Kāyika), Vocal (Vācika) and mental (mānasika). *Pranantum* meaning bowing is a form of bodily worship. To one who is

incapable of all the above three modes of worship, at least praising or stotra (*stotum*) is suggested in the verse.

The word ādi in the third line of the verse has been interpreted to mean (a) the devas, Indra and the other lords of the quarters (directions) or (b) the vedas or (c) the great devotees noted for Devi worship. Specific reference having been made to the Trinity (Hari, Hara and Viriñci) the word 'ādi' is held as denoting the lower rung of celestials like Indra and the lords of the quarters or directions by some scholars. The vedas which reveal the true nature of Brahman and Śakti, may also be indicated by 'ādi'. The verse 'Śrutīnām mūrdhāno (Verse No. 84 of Saundaryalaharī) lends support to this interpretation. The word 'ādi' may also refer to the great galaxy of Devi-worshippers-Devas and seers-among whom the celebrated are Manu, Candra. Kubera, Manmatha, Lopāmudrā, Sage Agastya, Skanda, Dattātreya, Indra and the sage Durvāsas. Some texts add Nandikeśvara, Sūrya, Yama, Saṁkara and Viṣṇu as well.

Commentators have read in this verse, many a mantra used for propitiating Devi. Kaivalyāśrama says that this verse indicates the 'Prāsāda', 'Anuttarā', the matṛkās, 'Vāgvādiñi', 'Śaivapañcākṣarī', 'Pāśādi-tryakṣarī' mantras, while Kāmeśvara Sūri would add 'Kādividyā' and 'Hādividyā'.

In fine, the 35 consonants severally and together representing the tattvas of the Āgama represent Śiva, and need the 16 vowels representing Śakti for their articulation. The matṛkās which are eternal sounds represent the Śiva-śakti Sāmarasya, from which the universe of śabda and artha are evolved.

The Tripurāmahimnopaniṣad says :

"Samapradhānau Samāsatvāu Samotayoḥ,
Samaśaktirajarā visvayoniḥ."

The Compound word 'Hariharaviriṅcādibhiḥ' iu the verse also indicates the praṇava 'Aum' which is a combine of 'a','u' and 'm', representing Viṣṇu, Rudra and Brahmā respectively. Some scholars are of the view that this first verse of Saundaryalaharī indicates the Ṣoḍaśākṣarī mantra (16 lettered Śrīvidyā Mantra) since the author has introduced 16 words in the first half of the verse.

VERSE—2.

Collecting microscopic particles of the dust falling from Thy lotus-feet, Brahma creates the worlds in regular order (intact), Vishnu (in the form of Adisesha) bears them somehow with great effort (might) though with thousand heads and Siva reducing the particles into ashes besmears his body with them(Vibhuti).

In this and in the next verse, the great potency of the lotus feet of Devi is brought forth. The creation, protection and destruction of the entire Universe have become

possible for Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively, only through the power derived by them from Devi. The greatness of the Caraṇa or feet of the Supreme Being is extolled in the Śruti as "Caraṇam pavitram vitatam purāṇam". The worship of Devi's feet has been traditionally enjoined on Devi-worshippers. (Śrīpādukāṃ pūjayāmi namaḥ) This is indicative of the greatness and importance of Devi's lotus-feet.

Commentators refer to Devi's four feet (Caraṇas)-the śukla, rakta, miśra and nirvāṇa-the first two resting on the Ājñā cakra, the third on the Anāhata cakra, and the fourth on the thousand-petalled lotus on the head (Dvādaśānta) with Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Rudra and Sadāśiva as their respective deities. The Rakta and Sukla caranas (feet) stand for creation and protection, the miśra for dissolution and the Nirvāṇa Carana for final beatitude (or eternal supreme bliss). This is perhaps only an esoteric view. Other scholars are of the view that Devi's feet are only two and that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra derive their respective avocations from the different colours of the dust particles of Devi's lotus-feet (colours such as rakta, śukla, miśra etc.,)

It is significant that Bhagavatpada commences the work with an adoration of Devi's lotus-feet and concludes the Saundaryalaharī with almost similar praise of the greatness of Her lotus-feet (Verse No. 2 and Verse No. 98). The first verse is an introductory or benedictory one , and the last two verses (99 & 100) are phalaśruti or concluding verses. The second and the 98th verses glorify the greatness of Devi's feet.

The Upakrama (beginning) and Upasaṁhāra of this great stotra are typical of Devi Upāsana (worship) in which the Śrīpādukā is the centre of worship.

A great South Indian Scholar explains the meaning of this second verse graphically as follows :—The Divine mother was walking in the pleasure garden of Śrīpuram along with attendants. Brahmā after having had darśan of Devi, gathered the dust from the path on which Devi had trodden. With the aid of this dust Brahmā created the fourteen worlds. Viṣṇu as Ādiśeṣa, having known that all the worlds are only particles of the dust of Devi's feet, bears them on His heads with care and reverence. Rudra awaits the time of the Mahāpralaya (the great Deluge), to have the gains (dust from Devi's feet) derived by Brahmā and Viṣṇu. At that time He reduces the worlds (dust particles of Devi's feet) into ashes and besmears His body with that Vibhūti. 'Avikalān—The protection by Viṣṇu is upto the final dissolution; it also ensures the existence of the Universe in the regular order in which it has been created. Lokān—Fourteen worlds. They are—Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Suvaḥ, Mahaḥ, Janaḥ, Tapaḥ, and Satya and the nether worlds—Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasātala, Talātala, Mahātala and Pātāla. Saṁkṣubhya : with much concern.

VERSE—3.

The particles of dust of Thy Lotus feet serve to remove the inner darkness of the ignorant (those who have not attained Tatva-jnana or divine knowledge). In other words, the dust is the sun that dispels the inner darkness of the ignorant or the worldly-minded.

The speck of the dust is a flood of fragrance emanating from the bunch of flowers of the Kalpaka tree of caitanya or clear consciousness, awakening the unknowing or dull-witted. To those in the grip of chill penury, they (the dust particles) are a string of gems of the Cintamani variety. And to those drowned in the ocean of earthly existence (Samsara—the ocean of births and deaths) that dust becomes the tusk of the wild boar of Muraripu i.e. Vishnu who incarnated as Varaha.

This verse is only a continution of the adoration of the dust of Devi's feet, described in the previous one. In the preceding verse, the importance of the dust to the Devatās has been brought out. In the present one, how the dust dispels ignorance (avidyā), dullness, poverty and attachment to worldly life in the case of mortals, is described.

When the sun does not shine, the world is shrouded in darkness. Light is essential for making things around us perceptible. So also ignorance (Avidyā i.e. lack of knowledge of the Supreme or Paramātman) envelops the soul and makes man incapable of knowing the reality of the soul (Jīva) and its identity with the Supreme Soul (Brahman). At dawn the Sun seems, to one standing on the sea-shore, to rise from an island in the middle of the sea. As the sun rises, darkness is dispelled and the entire world becomes active. The first line of this śloka compares the speck of dust from Devi's feet to the Sun. The imaginary place whence the dust rises is described as a city in the centre of an island in the mid-sea. Timiramihiroddīpanakari : promoting knowledge that dispels ignorance.

In the second line *caitanya*, which is the power that kindles the mind to know and understand the reality of the Jīva, is spoken of as a cluster of flowers of the Kalpaka tree (i.e. the tree of Atmajñāna). In the next line reference is made to the celestial gem, cintāmaṇi, which is capable of satisfying all desires of its possessor. The speck of dust of Devi's feet grants man's earthly desires and spiritual aspirations too. It may be noted that the abode of Devi is known as Cintāmaṇi-gṛha and the Māyā-bīja of Devi is termed 'Cintāmaṇibīja.'

The last line of this verse draws a comparison between the particle of dust of Devi's feet and the tusk of Muraripu. *Muraripu* : Mura, a demon, was killed by Krishna, and Muraripu is an epithet of Krishna or Viṣṇu; and in this context, refers to the incarnation of Viṣṇu as Varāha-the wild boar. Hiraṇyākṣa stole the earth (Bhūloka) and disappeared with it into the under-world (Pātāla). At that time, Viṣṇu incarnated as a huge wild boar, reached pātāla, redeemed the earth from him and rose above the sea with the earth in his tusk. Even so, the dust of Devi's feet can salvage human beings from the cycle of births and deaths and lead them to eternal bliss. This verse connotes the importance of the worship of Devi's feet for those who desire worldly happiness, for shedding off the inner darkness of ignorance (avidyā), leading to knowledge of the Self and the consequent attainment of liberation or mokṣa-the supreme goal of mankind.

According to some of the commentators, this verse is indicative of the Kāmarāja-mantra that is to be meditated upon by votaries of Śrīvidyā. To those who lack

knowledge of Ātmavidyā, Devi dispels their ignorance; to the dull-witted, She grants discriminatory powers and to the needy She bestows more than what they desire for. Eventually She is the resurrector from worldly bondage. Hence Devi has been described as.

"Yā bhogadāyinī devī jīvanmuktipradā na sā;
Mokṣadā to na bhogāya Lalitā tūbhayapradā."

Anandagiri reads in this verse the Vaiṣṇavī mantra and the Nandikeśvara mantra.

VERSE—4.

Thou, the refuge of all the worlds ! All Devas (gods) except Thee, vouchsafe protection to devotees and grant their desires by gestures of their hands. Thou alone doth not show forth the varada and abhaya (granting and protecting) gestures. It is so because Thy feet are by themselves powerful to protect those in the grip of fear and grant more than what is desired for by devotees.

The substance of the two preceding verses is elaborated in this verse. The word '*abhaya*' means freedom from fear. Vara, means grant of desires. One can see the postures of hands of deities (in general) in icons, sculptures or pictures of deities. The right hand of deities (generally) has the abhaya mudrā, with fingers upward denoting protection from fear and the left with the vara mudrā, with fingers pointing downwards (indicating granting of boons). In the case of deities having more than two hands, it is generally found that one of the hands on the right side is in the abhaya pose and one on the left side is in the vara pose. But these poses of hands are not always found in the case of Devi icons (of metal or stone) or even in Devi pictures. It may be noted that Devi is described here as having a sugarcane bow, string, aṅkuśa and arrows of flowers respectively in Her hands and not with abhaya and vara gestures. The Tantric texts also portray Devi as having the bow, string, aṅkuśa and arrows in Her four hands.

In this context, the term 'abhaya' means freedom from fear of the cycle of births and deaths. The word 'Vara' connotes satisfaction of all desires or kāma. This verse according to SriŚamkara Bhagavatpāda may imply that worship of Devi's feet (if properly carried out) will grant the fourfold goals of human life—Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa, the two former leading to the latter two.

Some scholars are of the view that while even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra work for creation, protection and destruction, with effort, Devi has no function requiring effort. She is the source of all happiness, temporary or eternal, temporal or spiritual, and is also the refuge from all fear to those who devoutly worship Her feet.

In the Tanjavur District of Tamilnadu there is a sacred place called Āvadayarkoil, famous for its historic, ancient and architectural temple built by the great Tamil Saint

Māṇikkavācakar. Devi Yogāmbikā (inside this shrine) here, has no image-representation as in other temples. Only two feet (carved in stone), placed on a pedestal are worshipped as Devi. It seems that the inner meaning of the fourth verse of Saundaryalaharī is fully exemplified by this symbolic form of Devi in the temple at Āvadayārkoil.

In this verse the superiority of Devi above all gods and the importance of the worship of Devi's feet are brought out. Scholars hold that the Bālā mantra, "Aiṃ, Klīṃ, Sauḥ" is indicated by this verse. According to Ānandagiri, the Kāmakalā mantra, by which happiness in this world and mokṣa at the end, are vouchsafed, is brought forth.

VERSE—5.

Once Vishnu having worshipped Thee—the bestower of all prosperity on those who worship Thee (through mind, speech and body) -concentrated on Thy Divine Form-and assuming the form of a woman, impassioned even Siva, (the Controller of all senses, the destroyer of the three cities and the enemy of Kāma). Has not Smara (Kāma, the God of Love) because of having bowed before Thee, obtained a personality, pleasingly attractive to the eyes of Rati (his beloved) and become capable of generating passion even in the minds of great sages.

This verse refers to the anecdote of the Mohini incarnation of Mahā Viṣṇu at the time when nectar (amṛta) was got after churning of the ocean of milk by the Devas and Asuras. This Mohini Avatāra was repeated at the desire of Śiva. Śiva the greatest of yogins, who had controlled all senses and passions and burnt Kāma (the God of passion) to ashes, was kindled by passion on seeing the Mohini form of Viṣṇu and lost himself. Viṣṇu was able to get this enticing form because of his worship of Devi. It is also said that Viṣṇu once took the form of a beautiful woman and killed a demon by name Kanakaswami and that Śiva was enticed by this feminine form of Viṣṇu. As already stated, Viṣṇu was one of the great Devi-ūpāsakās and the seer of the Vaiṣṇavī (Devi) mantra.

Another anecdote given in this context is follows :—Lord Śiva saved the world by destroying Tripurāsura. The other Asuras feared destruction of their entire community by Śiva. In a group they prayed to Viṣṇu to guard them from Śiva's wrath and protect their clan from total annihilation. Viṣṇu promised to do so, and was thinking about the means of appeasing Śiva. Sage Nārada came there just then. He noticed anxiety writ large on Viṣṇu's face. On knowing the reason for his anxiety, Nārada advised Viṣṇu to worship Devi in the form of Śrīcakra and meditate upon Devi by repeating the Devi Mahamantra which would satisfy all desires. Then Nārada departed. Viṣṇu went in search of a preceptor who could initiate him in the Devi mantra. Not long after, Devi Parāśakthi appeared before Viṣṇu and taught him the mantra and the mode of worshipping the Śrī cakra. By prolonged worship and meditation of Devi, Viṣṇu got the power to assume any form that he wished for. And thus he had the all-attractive Mohini Avatara and deceived the asuras while serving amṛta (nectar) got from the churning of the ocean. On a glance at this Mohini, Śiva's mind got stirred and he lost control of his senses.

Smara (the god of love) also worshipped Śrīcakra, meditated on Devi chanting the 'Pañcadaśākṣarī' (15 lettered spell) mantra and thereby got the grace of Devi, for converting himself into such a beautiful person as that anyone on whom he (Kāma) cast his eyes, would be infused with passion instantaneously. Thus Kāma acquired the power to captivate the entire world of living beings. Even great sages like Viśvāmitra had to abandon penance on being kindled by Kāma (passion).

Rati is said to be beauty par excellence among the fair sex. The fact, that she had been attracted by Smara's (Kāma's) personality, indicates that Kāma commonly known as Manmatha is the supreme beauty among men. The words 'ratinayanalehyena vapuṣā' in the verse refers to the anecdote that Kāma, after having been burnt to ashes by the fire that emanated from Śiva's third eye, got back to life by Devi's grace and has since then been invisible to all eyes except his wife's [Rati's] alone. Even with an invisible formless existence Kāma's success is due to Devi's grace.

That sages with long years of penance to their credit, and Lord Śiva, the supreme controller of the senses, were unable to resist the temptation of passion by perceiving Kāma and Viṣṇu [in Mohinī form] respectively, because Kāma and Viṣṇu had been blessed by Devi on being pleased by their worship, are positive proofs of the extraordinary power and greatness of Devi. Indirectly this verse tells about the efficacy and greatness of Śrīvidyā, [the worship of Devi through the tāntric modes of Her worship].

The Vāmakeśvara Tantra also confirms thus :

"Etāmeva purārādhya vidyāṃ trāilokyamohinīṃ;
Trāilokyaṃ mohayāmāsa kāmārim bhagavān Hariḥ.
Kāmadevopi deveśīṃ devīṃ tripurasundarīṃ;
Samārādhyābhavalloke sarvasāubhāgyasundaraḥ.

It may be noted in this context that Viṣṇu and Smara [Manmatha] are the ṛsiṣ [sages] to whom the Kāma and Vaiṣnavī mantras were revealed. Again in this verse an implied reference to the worship of Devi in the form of 'Śrīcakra' and the greatness of the Pancadaśākṣarī and other Devi mantras is found. According to Acyutānanda and some others this verse contains the 'Sādhya-Siddhāsana-Vidyā, 'H' and 'Ra' in the word Hariḥ 'Ī' and anusvara Ṁ in the word Jananīṁ spell the bija 'Hrīm'. The word Smara [Kāma] indicates the Kāmabīja 'Klīm'; 'Va' in the word Vapuṣā, 'Le' in the word 'lehyena' and anusvāra-Ṁ in the word 'munīnāṃ', spell the bīja 'Blem'. The mantra is 'Hrīṁ, Klīṁ, Bleṁ.

Anandagiri traces in this verse the mantras of the Bhūpura (Trailokyamohanacakra) in the Śrīcakra, Aṁ, Āṁ, Sauḥ.

VERSE—6.

Oh Daughter of the snow-clad Himālaya mountain! Cupid, the God of Love has only a bow made of flowers, with its string comprised of a cluster of honey-bees, and has arrows barely five. The spring

season is his vassal (assistant) and the Southern breeze, his war-chariot. Yet (with such frail equipment, bodiless and alone though he be, Cupid (Manmatha) subjugates the entire universe, having obtained some favour through Thy benign side-glance.

In this verse the anti-thesis between the inadequacy of the ability and equipment of Kāma (Cupid) and his unfailing all-round success are presented in relief. His weapons have neither the strength nor the fitness to be used or wielded, in his unceasing effort over all sentient beings. Nor has he limbs to enable him to wield them.

It is well known that Kāma was burnt to ashes by the fire of Śiva's third (forehead) eye, when he attempted to kindle passion in Śiva towards Pārvati, and that later, in response to the prayers of Rati, he (Kāma) was restored to life, but without a body. Kama's bow is of tender flowers (short-lived), and hence incapable of being bent. The bow-string of honey-bees, ever unsteady, always on the move in search of honey and in disarray can hardly be strung. The arrows are only five, so few as to be exhausted in no time. Nor have they darts to pierce. These arrows are — Aravinda (lotus), Aśoka (Peepul), Cūta (mango), Navamallikā (Jasmine), and Nīlotpala (blue lotus). Spring season, Kāma's mate is transitory-lasting for only two months in a year—and so of doubtfnl assistance. The southern breeze, not blowing always, nor blowing everywhere, invisible and formless, can hardly be useful as a chariot. Kāma himself—having no body—cannot avail himself of these weapons and assistance. He has no arms to wield weapons, nor the feet to stand in the chariot and fight, no eyes to see, nor mouth to speak to his vassal, Vasanta. But it is a paradox, that with all these disabilities, inadequate and useless weapons, and unreliable assistance, Kāma is able to subjugate the entire world of living beings, nay the universe in its entirety. Undoubtedly this is because of his obtaining the gracious blessing of Devi through her side-glances. That with the omnipotent grace of Devi, even the impossible can be achieved is the purport of this verse.

Manmatha (Kāma) is one of the twelve celebrated devotees of Devi. The Manmatha or Kāma-Vidyā was revealed to him by Devi herself, in response to his prolonged worship and meditation of Devi for three years through the Meru-mantra (Vide Tripurā-rahasya, Māhātmya Khanda Chapter 26). It is related that Devi conferred on Kāma, parts (amśas) of her own bow and arrows.

According to some scholars the Kāma-bīja (Klīm) is traceable in this verse—from the letters 'Ka' in 'Kāmapi' 'l' in Malaya, 'ī' in 'Maurvī' and the bindu 'ṃ' in 'Pauṣpam' joined together. Ānandagiri traces in this verse the bījamantra of the Cakreśvarī of the Sarvāśāparipūraka Cakra. viz. 'Aim, Klīm, Sauh.'

VERSE—7.

May Thou with Thy breasts like the temples (mastakas) of a young elephant, with Thy slender waist which is adorned by a jingling girdle-string (belt-like gold waist-ornament called Odyāṇa having small tinkling gold bells attached), with Thy face blooming like the

autumnal full moon (of the Saradritu, withThy four hands holding bow, arrows, noose and goad (ankusa), Thou the pride of Siva (the Ahamkararūpinī of Siva), manifest Thyself before us.

[The word 'Karikalabha' has been interpreted as the young elephant and as the best o tuskers. The comparison of Devi's face to the autumnal moon is intended to bring out the glory, the calmness and the grace of Her form. While the moon suffers dimunition during the dark fortnight and has an indelible spot, Devi's face is full with all the Kalās and without any blemish as in the following description, 'Kalaṅkakārśyanirmukta Śaraccandranibhānanā. Emphasis is laid on the glorious fullness and the blemishless character of Devi's countenance]

This verse portrays the Divine Mother (Citśakti) in Her gross (sthūla) form as distinguished from the subtle (sūkṣma) and sublime or superb (para or vāsanāmaya) forms. In this gross form, physical features such as hands, feet, face etc., are attributed to the divine form so as to facilitate contemplation by the aspirant (Sādhaka). Followers of the Samayācāra school of Devi worship, meditate on Devi's form and worship Her mentally in the various (cakras) or psychic centres-lotuses inside the human body. At each end of the Merudaṇḍa or the spinal cord that runs from the skull downwards to the anus, there is a thousand-petalled lotus. The one at the lower end is called the Kula-sahasrāra and the other at the upper end, almost at the centre of the head (brain), is known as the Akula-sahasrāra. Between these two thousand-petalled lotuses and along the spinal cord (merudaṇḍa) there are six plexuses or lotuses. They are :—(1) Mūlādhāra-a four-petalled lotus, a little above the anus, (2) Svādhiṣṭhāna, or six-petalled lotus, at the root of the genital organ, (3) Maṇipūraka-a ten-petalled lotus at the navel; (4) Anāhata-a twelve-petalled lotus in the heart region, (5) Viśuddhi-a sixteen-petalled lotus in the region of the neck and (6) Ājñā-a two-petalled lotus between the eye-brows.

Devi manifests Herself to the sādhaka (devotee) in the Maṇipūraka cakra, when the devotee in his internal mental worship makes all kinds of offerings to Devi, and bedecks Her with all varieties of jewels and ornaments made of resplendent rubies, emerald etc. Thence Devi is conducted, to the Anāhata cakra in Her upward move to the Akula Sahasrāra (the upper thousand-petalled lotus). The lustrous and wonderful form of Devi as meditated upon and apparent in the Anāhata cakra, is described in this verse. More information about Samaya form of Devi worship is given in verses 9, 10, 19, and 21. This form of Devi is the most popular one and appealing to most aspirants. The Rudra Yāmala says :—

"Dhyānāśaktau tu sarvāsāṃ dhyānaṃ tattu samaṃ smṛtaṃ". Sage Durvasas in the first verse of his Śaktimahimna stotra describes Devi in similar lines :—

"Ādikṣānta samastavarṇasumaṇiprote vitānaprabhe,
Brahmādipratimābhikīlitaṣadādhārābjakakṣonnate;
Brahmāṇḍābjamahāsane janani te mūrtimbhaje cinmayīṃ,
Sauṣumnāyatapītapaṅkajamahāmadhyatrikoṇasthitāṃ.

Some scholars are of the view that this verse describes the Devi's form for meditation by beginners in Śrīvidyā. They discern four modes of worship of Devi—the meditation upon the stūla (gross), upon the Sūkṣma (subtle), upon Sūkṣmatara (the subtler) and upon the Sūkṣmatama (subtlest) forms. The forty names of Devi in the Lalitā Sahasranāma—from the 12th name, 'Nijāruṇaprabhāpūramajjadbrahmāṇḍa-maṇḍalā, upto the 51st name (inclusive) 'Sarvābharaṇabhūṣitā'—describe the sthūla (gross form) of Devi. The sūkṣmarūpa (the subtle form) are the mantras. The five names of Devi in the Lalitā Sahasranāma from the 85th, 'Śrīmadvāgbhavakūtaikasvarūpa-mukhapankajā' to the 89th nāma, 'Mūlakūtatrayakalebarā' describe this sūkṣmarūpa (subtle form) of Devi. The Sūkṣmatara (subtler) form is the Kāmakalākṣara described by the two names, 'Mūlamantrātmikā' and 'Mūlakūtatrayakalebarā' (nāmas 88 and 89.)

The Sūkṣmatama form is the Kuṇḍalinīrūpa of Devi portrayed in the 22 names of Devi beginning from the 90th nāma of Lalitā-Sahasranāma and ending with the 111th nāma (from 'Kulāmṛtaikarasikā' to 'Bisatantutanīyasī'.)

The compound word 'Pariṇataśaraccandravadanā' in this verse speaks of the face of Devi as akin to the autumnal full moon. The śaradṛtu is the quietest part of the year in India, it being neither hot nor cold, almost throughout the country. This period of two months extends roughly from the middle of October to the middle of December, when the sky will be clear of clouds* and the moon shining bright at night. The full moon is mentioned to denote his fullness of the kalās.

The third line of the verse makes mention of the weapons in Devi's four hands which are the aṅkuśa or goad, pāśa or noose, a sugarcane bow and five arrows. The goad shines like the crescent-moon. The noose is of coral, while the bow is of sugarcane of the dark red variety with a string of honey-bees. The five arrows are of kamala, raktakairava, kalhāra, indīvara and sahakāra flowers. The Kālikā-purāṇa names as Harṣaṇaṁ, Recanaṁ, Mohanaṁ, Śoṣaṇaṁ and Māraṇaṁ. The Jñānārṇava cites the arrows as - Kṣobhaṇaṁ, Drāvaṇaṁ, Ākarṣaṇaṁ, Vaśyaṁ and Unmādanaṁ. According to Tantrarāja they are Mādana, Unmādana, Mohana, Dīpana and Śoṣaṇa.

The four weapons, adorning the four arms of Devi, referred to in this verse are only in their stūla (gross) form. Several texts explain the inner meaning of these weapons and their sūkṣma (subtle) and parā or vāsanā (sublime) forms. The subtle form of these weapons is said to be their mantras. The Bhāvanopaniṣad says :—"Rāgaḥ Pāśaḥ; dveṣo aṅkuśaḥ; Śabdādi pañcatanmātrāḥ pañca Puṣpabāṇāḥ; mana ikṣudhanuḥ." (desire is noose, hate is goad, the five senses are the arrows, and mind is the bow).

The Lalitā Sahasranāmā has:—

"Rāgasvarūpapāśāḍhyā, krodhākārāṅkuśojjvalā,
Manorūpekṣukodaṇḍā, pancatanmātrasāyakā"

* Except in the far south of the eastern coastal region.

According to the Yoginihṛdaya :—

"Icchāśaktimayaṃ pāśaṃ aṅkuśaṃ jnānarūpiṇaṃ,
Kriyāśaktimayaṃ bāṇadhanuṣī dadhadujjvalaṃ" (Yoginīhṛdaya, VI-53)

The noose, the goad and the arrows signify the powers of desire, knowledge, action respectively and the bow makes them effulgent.

'Rāgaḥ' means mental desires such as greed, passion etc., which lead one to bondage and samsāra. Dveṣa (or Krodha) consists of dislikes, which emanate from a knowledge of undesirability of things. This knowledge (jñāna) of the verities controls the mind and restricts it from the external sense-objects, represented by the arrows (tanmātras). The arrows representing the five tanmātras along with the bow point to vicissitudes of the mind (sankalpa and vikalpa) which lead to all forms of activity. The bow and the arrows are also said to represent the Antaḥkaraṇa (inner consiousness) and the jñānendriyas (organs of knowledge). Hence it may be concluded that the noose in Devi's hand is the Icchā śakti, the goad the Jñāna śakti and the arrows the Kriyā śakti. The significance of the weapons is that the meditation of the Devi along with the weapons in Her hands is necessary for mokṣa.

According to Sage Durvasas, one of the celebrated devotees of Devi, meditation on the bow, arrows, the noose and the goad in Devi's four hands enables the meditator to realise the illusive nature of samsāra and wordly objects, to overcome mṛtyu - the cycle of births and deaths—and to attain liberation or mokṣa. Sage Durvasas says in his Śakti-mahimna Stotra :—

"Cāpadhyānavaśādbhavodbhavamahāmoham mahājṛmbhaṇaṃ,
Prakhyātaṃ prasaveṣucīntanavaśāttattaccharavyaṃ sudhīḥ;
Pāśadhyānavaśāt samastajagatāṃ mṛtyorvaśitvam
Mahādurgastambhamahāṅkuśasya manananmāyāmameyām taret."

In this context the following from the Tripuropaṇiṣad is worth mention :—

"Sṛṇyeva Sitayā viśvacarṣaniḥ pāśena pratibadhnātyabhīkān;
Iṣubhih pañcabhirdhanuṣā ca vidhyatyādiśaktiraruṇā viśvajanyā"

The Omniscient Creatrix denounces with Her arrows the fickle-minded who are carried away by worldly desires, pleasures and dislikes, and by contrast leads those who control their mental desires and senses to liberation.

The words 'Puramathituḥ' and 'āhopuruṣikā' literally mean the 'pride of Śiva'. The basic Devi mantras (three bījas) as a whole, are called 'Tripuraṃ'. Śiva is said to have churned the milk of the three mantras (bījākṣaras) with his mind as the churning instrument. As a result, up arose the butter of Devi's person (svarūpā). Because of this Śiva is known as 'Tripuramathana' or in brief Puramathana or Puramathitā. (Rudrayāmala).

Devi is described as the 'Āhopuruṣikā' of Śiva; i.e. the proud realisation of Siva's prowess viz. Śakti as seen in the following :— "Darpādyātmaviṣaye yā sambhāvanā sāmarthyāviṣkaraṇaṃ", which was due to Devi's grace.

Lakṣmīdhara comments, "Āhopuruṣikā—ahośabda āścaryavācī, puruṣaśabdasya pratyagātmavācinah ahaṃśabdavācyatvaṃ lakṣyate; atah aho ahambhāvah āhopuruṣikā, ahañkāra iti yāvat. Rudrasyāhañkārarūpitvam bhagavatyāḥprapancitam"

The expression 'Ahaṁ' herein connotes the pratyagātmā or Jīva, and by its secondary significance refers to the ahaṁbhāva, which arose when Śakti manifested Herself as 'ahaṁ'.

The following lines are worthy of being remembered in this context :—

"Ahamityekamadvaitam yatprakāśātmavibhramaḥ;
Akarassarvavarṇāgryaḥ prakāśaḥ paramaḥśivah;
Hakārontyaḥ kalārūpo vimarśākhyaḥ prakīrtitaḥ;
Anayoḥ sāmārasyaṃ yat parasminnaham sphutaṃ."

The Ahaṁbhāva referred to in this verse is the ego (the consciousness of the 'I') which became manifest when the impulse for creation arose in the Supreme Being at the time of creation (Sṛṣṭi). The expression 'Puramathituh' also suggests the inseparable association of Śiva with Śakti, to be recognised and realised in worship; (as already stated in verse No. 1 supra.)

Commentators discern the following mantras as represented by the weapons in Devi's hands:—Bow: syllable 'taṁ', the five arrows: 'Drāṁ, Drīṁ, Klīṁ, Blūṁ, and Saḥ.' Pāśa: 'Hrim', and the Aṅkuśa: 'kroṁ'. It is also said that the Vaśinībīja i.e. 'Blūṃ' is here disclosed by some of the words in this verse, 'B' being taken from the word 'Bānān','L' from the word 'Karatalaih', 'Ū' from the word 'Puramathituḥ' and Bindu 'M' from the word 'Āstāṁ'. The Vāmakeśvara Tantra gives the vaśinībīja as 'Rblūm', if the syllable 'Rb' may be from 'Dhanurbāṇān' in the verse. Ānandagiri reads in this verse the mantra of the cakreśvari of the third āvaraṇa-Tripurasundarī "Hrīṁ Klīṁ, Sauḥ."

VERSE—8.

Fortunate are those few, who worship Thee who is in the form of the swell of consciousness and Infinite Bliss, Thee who is reclining (seated) on the mattress of Paramasiva spread on the cot in the form of Sadasiva, inside the mansion constructed of precious Cintamani gems, which mansion is surrounded by the pleasure garden of Nīpa

(Kadamba) trees, and which is in the island of gems of all kinds, encircled by rows of celestial (Kalpa) trees, the island being situated in the midst of the Amritasamudra or ocean of nectar.

Although this verse describes the Devi's abode, contemplation of the Devi's sthūla or gross form is also intended here. Commentators read in this verse worship of Śrīcakra in diverse ways. A succinct portrayal of Devi's abode is furnished by this verse.

In the middle of the ocean of nectar there is an isle of precious gems of infinite variety. All round the outskirts of this island, are rows of celestial, desire-granting trees-Kalpaka, Santāna, Haricandana, Mandāra and Pārijāta-trees. There is a palatial mansion inside these groves of celestial trees. The mansion is built of precious celestial gems called Cintāmaṇi which have the power to grant all desires. All round the mansion, there are pleasure gardens of Nīpa or Kadaṁba trees. Inside this mansion, in the central hall there is a regal seat (simhāsana) which has for its four legs (or which is borne by) Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, and Īśāna. Over this cot is spread a couch which is said to be Paramaśiva. On this couch sits the Supreme Brahman (Sadāśiva) on whose lap is seated Devi, the Parabrahmamahiṣī, in the form described in the previous verse. Śri Śaṁkarācārya says that those who worship Devi thus, as in this abode, are really blessed as they attain infinite bliss thereby.

Descriptions of Devi's abode as found in this verse are found in various works of Sri Śaṁkarācārya and other works relating to Devi-worship. In Bhagavatpāda's Tripurasundarī-vedapādastava it is described vividly as under :—(verses 7, 8, 9 & 10).

"Sudhāmayāya śubhrāya sindhūnām pataye namaḥ
Tasyamadhye maṇidvīpaḥ kalpakārāma bhūṣitaiḥ;
Astu me lalitāvāsaḥ svastidā abhayaṁkaraḥ
Kadambamañjarīniryadvāruṇīpāraṇonmadaiḥ;

Dvirephairvarṇanīyāya vanānāmpataye namaḥ
Tatravaprāvalīlīlāgaganollanghigopuram;
Mātaḥ kautūhalaṃ dadyāt samhāryam nagaram tava."

Sri Saṁkarācārya, in the first verse of Mantramātṛkāpuṣpamālā, describes Devi's abode as follows :—

"Kallolollasitāmṛtābdhilaharīmadhye virajanmaṇi-
Dvīpe kalpakavātikāparivṛte kādambavātyujjvale;
Ratnastambhasahsranirmitasabhāmadhye vimānottame,
Cintāratnavinirmitam Janani te simhāsanaṃ bhāvaye."

Sri Gauḍapādācārya, in his Subhagodayastuti, refers to Devi's abode in the following lines :—

"Sudhāsindhorantarvasatimaniśaṃ vāsaramayīṃ.
x x x x x
Sudhāsindhau tasmin suramaṇigṛhe sūryaśaśino-
ragamye raśmīnāṃ samayasahīte tvaṃ viharase."

The Lalitā Sahasranāma Stotra (verses 22 & 23) also mentions the Devi's abode in the nāmas :—

"Cintāmaṇigṛhāntasthā pañcabrahmāsanasthitā
Mahāpadmātavīsaṁsthā kadambavanavāsinī
Sudhāsāgaramādhyasthā kāmākṣī kāmadāyinī."

In the Rājarājeśvarī tantra, the abode of Devi in the Maṇidvīpa (Ratnadvīpa) in the midst of the ocean of nectar is described at length furnishing the extent of the ocean, the island, etc., in yojanas (one yojana = 8 miles) as detailed below :—

"Anekakotibrahmāṇḍakotīnām bahirūrdhvataḥ;
Sahasrakotivistīrṇasudhasindhostu madhyame.
Ratnadvīpe jagaddīpe śatakotipravistare;
Pañcavimsati tatvātmapañcaviṁśativaprakaiḥ.
Navaratnamayaiḥ stambhair hātakākalitaih śubhaiḥ;
Anekakotivitataiḥ maṇikuttimamanditaiḥ,
Jātīcampakapunnāgaketakī bakulādibhiḥ;
Bilvaiśca sahakāraiśca kalpakaiśca kadambakaiḥ.
Mandārapārijātaiśca santānādyaiḥ suśobitaiḥ;
Sarvartukusumaiḥ sarvavāñchitārthaphalapradaiḥ,

× × × × ×

Śatayojanamunnamrair gopurāttālamaṇḍapaiḥ;
Ravikotisamaprakhyaiḥ kāñcanairmaṇitoranaiḥ,
Anekādityasaṁkāśaiḥ virājita digantaraih;
Trilakṣayojanāyāmacintāmaṇigṛhāntare."

The mañca or seat on which Devi is seated is described as in this verse in the Bhairava Yāmala Tantra in detail as follows :—

"Śivātmake mahāmañce maheśānopabarhaṇe;
Atiramyatale tatra kaśipuśca sadāśivaḥ;
Bhṛtakāśca catuṣpādā mahendraśca padagrahaḥ;
Tatrāste parameśānī mahātripurasundarī."

Sri Śaṁkarācārya himself speaks of the Devi's seat as Īśānādipadaṃ Śivaikaphalakaṃ Ratnāsanaṃ te śubham." (Mantramātṛkāpuṣpamāla-3), and as 'Pancabrahmamayo mancaḥ' in his Tripurasundari-vedapādastava.

According to Purāṇas and tantras, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Īśāna are Devi's servants. They assume the form of the four legs of the cot on which Devi is seated—Brahmā being the south-east leg, Visnu the south-west, Rudra the north-west and Īśana the north-east leg. Paramaśiva, the Nirguṇa Brahman, is the silent spectator (śākṣi) of the nature of Cit or Consciousness, and Ānanda i.e. Bliss. The Devi is meditated as inseparable from Paramaśiva-a welling of Consciousness and Bliss (cidāndalaharī).

The mode of worship described in this verse is followed by the Samaya school of Devi worshippers as distinguished from the Kaula school. The Samayācāra and the Kaulācāra are understood as referring to internal and external worship respectively. Followers of Samayācāra worship Devi mentally and internally, meditating on some assumed physical form or Śrīcakra, the body or mind itself as constituting the Śrīcakra or on the vacuum in the centre of the heart called 'Daharākāśa'. This kind of worship is mainly the union of Śakti with Śiva and worshipping Śiva and Śakti in their inseparable creationistic aspect. The essence of this Samayācāra form of worship is the union of Citśakti with the Brahman in the body. Śiva is Samaya and Devi is Samayā—'Samaṃ yātīti samayaḥ'—Śiva; Samam yātīti samayā—Śakti or Devi. The equation or inter-similarity of Śiva and Śakti is held as five-fold. They are adhiṣṭhāna sāmya (similarity in abode), anuṣṭhāna sāmya (oneness in activity such as creation etc.,) avasthā sāmya (equality in state as dancing), nāma sāmya (similarity in name such as Śiva and Sivā, Bhava and Bhavatī etc.,) and rūpasāmya (similarity in form, colour etc., such as three eyes, red colour etc., in both).

A vivid account of Samayācāra is given in the Rudrayāmala. After initiation by a proper preceptor (guru), the devotee gains some progress in the sixfold and four-fold unions (āikya). He then undergoes a special kind of saṁskāra (purification) called Mahāvedhā on the ninth day (navamī) at the end of the Śarad-Navarātri. Devi manifests Herself to him in the Maṇipūracakra (navel) after rising from the Mūlādhāra. The devotee worships Devi, with all kinds of offerings mentally, bedecks Her with jewels made of precious stones, and thence leads Her to the Anāhata Cakra (heart region). Here again the devotee worships Devi mentally with sandal paste, flowers, incense, offerings, betels and slices of nut etc., Thereafter the Devi is conducted to the Viśuddhi cakra (throat region). Here Devi is again bedecked with jewels full of gems of the nature of the Kalāṣ of the Moon (candrakalās). Thence She is led to the Ājñācakra (region between the eye-brows) where the devotee offers nīrājana (burning of camphor). Thence Devi ascends to the thousand-petalled lotus (sahasrāra) in the centre of the upper part of the head and unites with Śiva in the citcandramaṇḍala (the region of eternal bliss). The devotee draws a curtain (mentally) and awaits, in an adjacent apartment, the Devi's return to the Mūlādhāra.

The above mode of meditation is given in brief as follows :—(similar to the one found in the 7th and 8th verses of the Saundaryalaharī).

"Sudhābdhau nandanodyāne ratnamaṇḍapamadyagāṃ;
Balārkamandalābhāsāṃ caturbāhuṃ trilocanāṃ.
Pāśāṅkuśa śarāṁścāpaṃ dhārayantīṃ śivāṃ śriyam:
Dhyātvā ca hṛdgataṃ cakraṃ vratastaḥ parameśvarīṃ,
Pūrvokta dhyānayogena cintayan japamācaret."

From the above it will be seen that the samaya form of worship requires a very high degree of concentration of the mind and a strict control oevr the senses, as in this process the entire worship is done mentally in the heart, (purely a Mānasika-Pūjā). In this mental worship, meditation of Devi in the form of Śrīcakra has to be done in the shapeless ākāśa or space, which is known as 'Viyadcakra', 'viyat' signifying ākāśa or space.

In the Kaula mode of worship, the Sricakra is inscribed on planks, or on the bark of a tree called Bhūrja, or on a piece of white cloth or on plates or sheets of gold or silver or an alloy of five metals. The devotee uses his limbs and other materials such as sandal-paste, flowers, milk, honey, fruits etc. Great care and personal discipline are needed in this mode of worship.

Interpreted in terms of the external Śrīcakra of the Kaulas, the Sudhāsindhu or ocean of nectar is the bindusthāna in the centre of the Śrīcakra over the four Śivacakras (triangles with apex upward constituting Śiva) and below the five Śakti-cakras (triangles with apex downward being the embodiment of Devi). A detailed explanation of these is found in verse No. 11. The five Śakticakras are the celestial (Kalpaka etc.,) trees, the kadamba garden and the maṇimaṇṭapa. When the body itself is meditated upon as the Śrīcakra, these parts of the Devi's abode are represented by different parts of the body.

Kāmeśvara Sūri, author of the Aruṇāmodinī commentary on Saundarya-laharī traces in this verse a reference to the Ānandalaharī, the first 41 verses of the Saundarya-laharī. The learned commentator gives the following connotations for the words comprising the verse as follows :—

Sudhāsindhu—'from the Himālayas, the abode of white glaciers to the southern ocean', Suravitapivātī—full of pilgrim centres, Maṇidvīpe—places fit for meditating, Nīpo-pavanavati—surrounded by kadamba trees, Cintāmaṇigṛhe—temples studded with Cintā-maṇi gems, Śivākāre mañce—in Mount Kailāsa white as crystal resembling Śiva in aspect, Paramaśivaparyaṁkanilayām—blessed as being placed on the lap of the divine couple, Pārvatī and Parameśvara, cidānandalaharīm—the stotra by name Ānandalaharī describing the pure cit aspect, Śakti or Devi. Kāmeśvara Sūri also interprets the verse as referring to the different parts of the body with the heart as the centre of worship (bindusthāna).

Devotees worshipping Devi in the vacuum in the middle of the heart between the three lower and the three higher psychic centres (cakras), as indicated in this (8th verse and in the preceding (7th) verse of Saundaryalaharī are, according to Sri Śaṅkarācārya, the few fortunate persons, because their ideal of liberation has come within their easy reach. According to some of the commentators, the union of Śiva and Śakti, (Bindu with Nāda) is indicated in the third line of this verse. Some scholars are of the view that the Kāmeśvara bīja 'Klīṁ' and the bīja 'hsauḥ' are suggested in this verse. Ānandagiri, the celebrated commentator, interprets this verse as pointing to the Kuṇḍalinī śakti.

VERSE—9.

Breaking through the Muladhara, the Manipura, the Svadhisthana, the Anahata, the Visuddhi, and Ajna cakras (plexuses) and having crossed Prthvi (earth), Āpas (water) Tejas (fire), Vayu (air), Akasa (ether) and Manas (mind) tatvas of the respective cakras, Thou reacheth the thousand-petalled lotus and sporteth there with Thy spouse Sadaśiva.

In this verse the meditation of Devi in her subtlest or sūkṣma form, the Kuṇḍalinī, is described. Kuṇḍalinī sleeps in the form of a serpent, in three coils and a half, resting in the psychic centre, Mūlādhāra. She is awakened by the yogin (devotee), led through the six cakras (plexuses) and the three granthis (knots), through the Suṣumṇā or spinal cord, unto the Citcandramaṇḍala (region of the ever-shining moon of consciousness), in the sahasrāra or thousand-petalled lotus in the centre of the head, below the skull. The Suṣumnā has two nāḍis (nerve-like elongations) Iḍā and Piṇgalā on either side.

The six lotuses or cakras (plexuses or psychic centres) along the suṣumṇā are collectively called 'Kulapatha' representing the five elements constituting the human body (microcosm) as also the universe (the macrocosom). The table in next page gives the details regarding these elements and their correlation with the six cakras, their qualities etc.,

While breaking through these cakras, the yogin gains mastery over the elements of the respective cakras. He floats on water, flies through distances in a very short time, darts into Ether and moves like the mind to any place he desires, and at last by union with Śiva becomes Śiva himself. Awakening of the Kuṇḍaliṇī, breaking through the cakras and passing into the Sahasrāra may be practised by Haṭhayoga or bhāvanā (assuming) or dhyāna (meditation). Awakened by the yogin through prāṇāyāma or control of the vital airs (breath), Kuṇḍalini pierces through the six cakras and the three intermediate granthis or knots. While in the last cakra i.e. Ājñā, she moves very quickly just as a stroke of lightning, except in the case of great yogins. The Haṭhayogapradīpikā says that Kuṇḍalinī allowed to sleep without being awakened keeps one in bondage, but when awakened, she leads him to liberation or mokṣa. He who leads the Kuṇḍalinī to the Sahasrāra gets his ignorance of the true nature of the self, dispelled.

This mode of worship called Antaryāga by votaries of the Kaula school and Satcakrabhedanam by the Samaya school of devotees is an essential and integral part of Devi upāsānā. The tatvas (verities) of the Samayins are reckond as twenty-five. They are 5 tanmātras or subtle elements, 5 bhūtas or gross elements, 5 organs of knowledge (touch, perception, hearing, taste and smell), 5 organs of action i.e. (mouth, legs, hands, anus and the genital organ), then the mind, Māyā (illusion), Śuddhavidyā, Maheśvara (or according to some Mahāmāyā) and Sadāśiva. Breaking the six psychic planes, conquering the 25 tattvas, the Kuṇḍalinī reaches the Sahaṣrāra (the thousand-petalled lotus at the apex of the Suṣumnā or spinal cord), and there unites with the Sadāśiva tattva. This fusion is considered as a separate tattva (26th) called Sādākhya—the Parabrahman—because of their (Devi and Sadāśiva) complete identity (tādātmya).

VERSE—10.

Thou drencheth the nadis (nerves) in the body with the flood of nectar gushing from Thy feet. Reaching again Thy own ground (Muladhara) and converting Thyself into a serpent with three coils and a half Thou sleepeth in the crevice in the centre of the Muladhara lotus.

Cakra or Lotus	Situation in the body	Number of petals	Tattva	Tanmātra or Guṇa	Presiding Deity	Khanda or region.
Mūlādhāra	Two inches above the anus	Four	Pṛthvī or Earth	Smell	Gaṇeśa	Agni Maṇḍala
Svādhiṣṭhāna	Root of the genitals	Six	Tejas or fire	Colour or perception	Brahmā	Brahma granthi
Maṇipūraka	Navel	Ten	Āpaḥ or water	Taste	Viṣṇu	Sūrya maṇḍala
Anāhata	Heart	Twelve	Vāyu or air	Touch	Rudra	Viṣṇu granthi
Viśuddhi	Neck	Sixteen	Ākāśa or ether	Sound	Jīva	Śoma Maṇḍala
Ājñā	Between the eye-brows	Two	Manas or mind	Indriyas (Karmendriyas, Jñānendriyas & Mind) Senses and Mind.	Guru or Preceptor.	Rudra Granthi.

Having described the ascent of the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti in the previous verse, the Bhagavatpāda portrays Her retrograde movement towards the Mūlādhāra from the Akula Sahasrāra in this verse. This verse and the preceding one, together, depict the meditation on the sūkṣmatama (most subtle or sublime) form of the Devi as stated in the 'Catuśśatī'—

"Anubhūya Paraṃ gatvā pītvā kulaparāmṛtaṃ;
Akulātkulakaṃ bhūyaḥ kulādakulam mahaḥ,
Evaṃ māṃ sundarīṃ dhyāyet sūkṣmadhyānam prakīrtitaṃ."

According to Lakṣmīdhara, the first half of this verse is in consonance with the Samaya form of Devi worship, while the second half represents the Kaula way of worship (cf. commentary on verse 41).

The nectar gushing through Devi's lotus feet, in the Sahasrāra is also traced in the Śruti thus :—

"Lokasya dvāramarcimatpavītraṃ ;
Jyotiṣmatbhrājamānaṃ mahasvat.
Amṛtasya dhārā bahudhā dohamānaṃ ;
Caraṇam no loke sudhitāndadhātu."

Rasāmnāyamahasaḥ' — This word is interpreted by Lakṣmīdhara as meaning the moon - the Candramaṇḍala (moon region) in the Sahasrāra (in the brain region). To the followers of Samayācāra both the moon in the sky and the citcandramaṇḍala in the Sahasrāra, represent the Śricakra, both have similar features and qualities; both shed nectar and possess all the sixteen Kalas. Devi's lotus - feet are deemed to shine in the moon-region of the Śrīcakra. The moon is considered to be the master of medicinal herbs and to ooze out water divine. Fire, Sun and Moon shed light. In the case of Fire, light is less but the heat is great. The Sun is very bright and very hot too. The moon also is luminous but not hot. It is cool and pleasant to look at and hence attracts all living beings. It may be recalled that devotees of Devi worship Her in the centre of the Moon on Full-moon nights.

The 'Candrakalā' from which the flood of nectar flows down is the 'Sadāśiva tattva' in the Akulasahasrāra (in the head). By union with Sadāśiva, the Sādākhya tattva is realised in the union of Jīva and Brahman (Jivabrahmaikyam). The 'Lalitāsahasranāma prescribes a mode of worship of the Candramaṇḍala in the sky as representing the Śrīcakra (Devi) for health and longevity. (Vide verses 245 and 246 of Lalitāsahasranāma stotra).

Kaivalyāśrama gives a different reading of the word as Rasāmnāyāmahasā and interprets that the Kulapatha i.e. the suṣumṇā is illumined by the six Āmnāyas through which the Kuṇḍalinī descends. The Sakti's abodes are Pūrva, Dakṣiṇa, Pascima, Uttara, Ūrdhva and Anuttara, while the Śambhava āmnāyas are Pārthiva, Āpya, Anala, Vāyavya, and Nābhasa. (Earthy, Watery, Igneous, Airy, Ethereal and Mental forms.)

While explaining the previous Verse, it was stated that the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti coil s herself into three rounds and a half (slender like the filament inslde the lotus stem) and rests in the Mūlādhāra padma with the tail caught in the mouth. The yogin, sitting in the Padmāsana pose and contracting the anus should raise the vāyu (air inside the body) upward and retain the air in Kumbhaka process (hold the breath). During this process coming into contact with the wind, the fire in the Svādhiṣṭhāna is kindled. The Kuṇḍalinī Śakti is awakened from sleep by the wind and heat. She moves upward through the six plexuses (Cakras), and the three Knots (Granthis) and joining with Śiva in the Sahasrāra, She enjoys infinite bliss. The meditation of Devi and the awakening of the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti and the raising of it to the Sahasrāra by the devotee leads him to liberation and bliss, through Jīvabrahmaikya—the union of the soul with the Paramātman.

The bindu (centrifugal spot) in the centre of the Mulādhāra lotus of triangular shape known as Kulakuṇḍa, resembling the hollow (inside) in the centre of the lotus-stalk, is the sleeping spot of the Kuṇḍalinī.

The term 'adhyuṣṭavalayaṁ' refers to the three circles and a half formed by the Kuṇḍalinī when she assumes a serpent-like form. This form is a symbolical representation of Śakti as in the Agnimaṇḍala (the region of Fire), with the letter 'A' (akāra) in the mūlādhāra, the Sūryamaṇḍala (the region of the Sun) with the letter 'U' (Ukāra), in the Anāhatā and the Somamaṇḍala (the region of the Moon) with the letter 'M̐' (Makāra), in the Ājnā, and their combination becoming 'Aum' the praṇava. The sound of the praṇava is the ardhamātrā.

" Umeti paramā śaktiḥ pūrva bhāvamupeyuṣī ;
Adhyuṣṭavalayākārā praṇavatvamupāgatā."

In other words, the three coils are the three sounds 'A, U, M' and the half coil is the ardhamātrā, The inner meaning of adhyuṣṭavalayaṃ is thus the praṇava itself. Hence it will be seen that Śakti is not different but identical with the Paramātman—denoted by the syllable 'Aum̐'.

The ascent of the Kuṇḍalinī to the Sahasrāra and the descent to the Mūlādhāra is succinctly described in the Varivāsyārahasya as under :—

" Dvādaśaṣoḍaśābhistapanaśaśidahanakalabhirākīrṇaiḥ;
Pañcāśadbhirvarṇairabhinnadehā KulīnāKuṇḍalinī.
Bisatanvī taḍidābhā mūlādhārasthapadmaśṛṅgāṭāt;
Bhitvāmūlahṛdājñāgatavahniravīndumaṇḍalatritayaṃ.
Vyomani cicchaśimaṇḍalamadhye tvakulena samgamya;
Ubhayāṅgasaṅgajanyaṃ pravāhayantī sudhāpūraṃ.
Svayamapi tatpānavaśānmattā bhūtvā punaśca tenaiva;
Mārgeṇa pārāvṛtya svasmin sthāne sukham svapiti. "

Sri Śaṁkarācārya, has also referred to the Kuṇḍalinī's stay in the Mulādhāra in his elucidation of the Devi's nāma "Kāmeśvaraprāṇanāḍī" in the Lalitā-triśati stotra thus :—

'Kāmeśvaraprāṇanāḍī' :— Tatrasuṣumṇānāmaka nāḍī
mūlādhārādārabhya brahmarandhraparyantaṃ gatā....
Mūlādhārādīni.....Vartante. Tasyāḥ mūle pṛthvīdevatā
bisatantutanīyasī kuṇḍalinyadhomukhāvaraṇaśaktiḥ nidrāti.'

The Kulakuṇḍalinī, united as She is with the twelve, sixteen and ten kalas of the Sun, Moon, and Fire respectively, and their matṛkas, is awakened from her sleep in the Mūlādhāra by the trained Yogin. Shining like lightning and slender as the filament (thread-like substance) inside the stalk of the lotus, the Kuṇḍalinī breaks thrugh the regions of the Fire, Sun and Moon in the Mūlādhāra, Anāhata and Ājñā cakras, and then unites with the Akula-Kuṇḍalinī in the Sahasrāra in the head. As a result, the nectar in the Paramākāśa gushes down the cakras. The Kuṇḍalinī, drinks deep of this nectar and descending through the Suṣūmnā (the spinal cord) reaches her abode and sleeps again in the cavity in the Mūlādhāra lotus. This is the experience of Yogins trained in this mode of worship of Devi but the practice needs the directions of a competent preceptor.

VERSE—11.

The angles of Thy abode (the Sricakra) which is made up of the nine mulaprakrtis or basic triangles (the nine primary causative forces of the universe) consisting of the four distinct Siva triangles (with apex upwards), and the five distinct Sakti-triangles (with apex downwards) kept apart from the former by the Bindu, with the eight-petalled lotus, the lotus of sixteen petals with the three circles around and the three lines, are counted as forty-three (forty-four.)

Having explained the inner mental worship (āntarapujā) in the previous verse, the author proceeds to describe the bahiryāga or external worship in the manifestation of the Devi as Śricakra which is Her gross (sthūla) form intended for external worship by the less spiritually advanced devotees. The Śrīcakra is usually drawn on metal-plates, sandal paste, Kunkum (vermillion), turmeric powder, on the bark of a tree called Bhūrja, on silk, or some other pure base and worshipped with accessories such as sandal—paste, flowers, incense, lamp, food-offerings, lighting of camphor, etc. The Śrīcakra emanates from a combination of four triangles with their apex pointing upwards, called the Śivacakras and five triangles with their apex downwards, called the Śakti-cakras, forming in all 43 angles at the ends, bounded by a lotus of eight petals, which in turn is surrounded by a lotus of sixteen petals; the whole encircled by a girdle of three circular rings and at last bounded

by quadrangular ramparts all round, having entrance-like openings one in the middle of each of the four sides. The Yāmala describes the Śrīcakra as follows :—

"Bindutrikōṇavasukōṇadaśārayugmamanvaśranāgadalasamyuta ṣoḍaśāraṁ;
Vṛttatrayaṁ ca dharaṇīsadanatrayaṁ ca Śrīcakrametadūditaṁ paradevatāyāḥ."

No mention is made of the four openings on the four sides of the Bhūpuratraya in the above Yāmala verse. Lakṣmīdhara quotes the above verse in his commentary with a different reading of the second line thus—

"Vṛttatribhūpurayutaṁ paritaścaturdvāḥ :
Śrīcakrametaduditaṁ paradevatāyāḥ."

In support of the above the learned commentator cites the Vedic text :—

"Satadvāṭṭāragamaṁtā ; saṁhāryaṁ nagaraṁ tava."

and interprets Satadvā as meaning four doorways. The Vāmakeśvara Tantra also mentions the four openings thus :

"Guṇavrittam tataḥ kuryāt caturasram ca tadbahiḥ ;
Caturdvārasamāyuktamevam syāccakramuttamaṁ."

The component parts of the Śrīcakra are : (1) The Bindu in the centre, (2) the Trikoṇa (the small triangle around the Bindu), (3) the Aṣṭakoṇa (the group of eight triangles surrounding the Trikoṇa), (4) the Antardāśāra (the inner group of ten triangles encircling, the aṣṭakoṇa), (5) The Bahirdaśāra (the outer row of ten triangles around the Antardaśāra, (6) The Caturdaśāra—(a set of fourteen triangles surrounding the Bahirdaśāra), (7) The lotus of eight petals called Aṣṭadala around the Caturdaśāra, (8) the Sodaśadala (the sixteen-petalled lotus encircling the Aṣṭadala), (9) The Mekhalātraya (the three circles or girdles around the sixteen-petalled lotus) and (10) The Bhūpura (the three quadrangular lines with openings on all the four sides).

According to the reading, 'Trayaścatvāriṁśat'—the angles or triangles of the Śrīcakra are forty-three, but Śri Śaṁkarācārya reckons the angles (Koṇas) as forty-four taking into account the Bindu also.

The word 'Śrīkaṇṭhaiḥ' means, 'one with poison in the throat' i.e., Śiva. The words 'Śrīkaṇṭhaiḥ' and 'Śivayuvatibhiḥ' connote the four Śiva and the five Śakti triangles in the Śrīcākra. The word 'Prabhinnābhiḥ' suggests the Śiva-Koṇas and the Śakti-Koṇas being kept apart. The combination of these nine is spoken of as 'Mūlaprakṛtibhiḥ' in the verse. And this union of Śiva-Śakti is the cause of all creation. The Mūlaprakṛtis in

respect of the microcosm or human body are the dhātus or basic components of the human frame. They are Tvak (Skin), Asṛk (blood), Māmsa, (Flesh), Medas (lymph) and Asti (bone). These five relate to Śakti while the four Śiva triangles denote Majjā (marrow), Śuklam (semen), Prāṇāḥ (the group of five prāṇas-Prāṇa, Apāṇa, Vyāna, Udāna and Samāna-the different airs inside the physical frame functioning for inhaling, exhaling etc.) and the Jīva or soul. Above these nine, Parāśakti is the tenth dhātu.

In the macrocosm or the universe (Braḥmāṇḍa) the five Śakti koṇas denote the Pṛthvī (earth), Āpaḥ (water), Tejas (fire), Vāyu (air) and Ākāśa (Ether). The four Śivacakras represent Māyā (illusion), Śuddha-Vidyā, Maheśvara and Sadāśiva (Eternal bliss). The entire universe being only a manifestation of the Śiva-Sakti union, the microcosm and the macrocosm are to be considered as Śrīcakra for purposes of meditation.

The Bindu, the eight-petalled lotus, the sixteen-petalled lotus and the quadrangular lines called Bhūpura are called Śiva cakras, while Trikoṇa (the innermost triangle), the Aṣtakoṇa (set of eight triangles) the two sets of ten triangles each, called Daśāra, and the Caturdaśāra (group of fourteen triangles) are reckoned as the five Śakti-cakras. The Śiva-cakras and the Śakticakras are united-the Bindu in the Trikoṇa, the eight-petalled lotus in the Aṣṭāra, the sixteen-petalled lotus in the two Daśāras, and the Bhūpura in the fourteen-cornered cakra or Caturdaśāra. The devotee has to realise the inseparable identity of Śiva and Śakti in this manner.

Prabhinnābhiḥ is also explained as meaning mingled or united. Śaraṇakōṇāh: Śaraṇa means resting place or abode. The emphasis is on Devi's presence in the Śricakra-whether in a diagrammatical Śricakra or in the microcosm or in the macrocosm. The reading 'Caraṇakōṇāḥ' would mean that all creation emanates from Devi's feet.

The nine cakras from the Bindu to the Bhūpura exemplify the creation of the microcosm and the macrocosm-the Jīva and Prapañca.

"Bindvādi bhūpurāntāni nava cakrāṇi Bhairavi,
Īkṣaṇādi praveśāntā sṛṣṭirīśena nirmitā.
Caturaśrādibīndvantā navacakrāṇi sundari;
Jāgradādivimokṣāntaḥ samsāro jīvakalpitaḥ"—(Śivadṛṣtiḥ).

The Tāntrik discipline called Śrīvidyā has for its objective, the summum bonum of life viz., release from bondage and from the cycle of births and deaths, which according to the Advaita Vedanta can be attained by jñāna alone. i.e., self-realisation. The worship of the Śrīcakra as representing the microcosm, the macrocosm and the Śiva-Śakti Sāmarasya is a discipline having the same purpose as the Advaitic Sādhana. It could as well be said that Śrīvidyā is Brahmavidyā.

Umānandanātha describes two prastāras (models) of the Śrīcakra in his Nityotsava. The yantra extending from the Bindu to the Bhūpura engraved in relief on a square plate of

gold (four inches wide) or other material weighing four palas (35 grams = 1 pala) is called Bhūprastāra.

The other called Meruprastāra is of three kinds. In the first, the Bhūpura, the Sodaśadalacakra, and the Aṣṭadalacakra constitute the Sṛṣṭi cakra, the caturdaśāra and the two daśaracakras make up the Sthiti cakra, while the Aṣṭakoṇa, the Trikoṇa and the Bindu form the Saṁhāra Cakra. Made up in the shape of a pyramid, the Sthiticakra stands in an elevated plane above the Sṛṣṭi cakra, and the Saṁhāracakra in a higher plane above the Sthiti cakra. In the second model of Meruprastāra, otherwise called Kūrmapṛṣṭha, the two lotuses (16 petalled and 8 petalled) are to be in a plane higher than the Bhūpura, and the six cakras from the caturdaśāra to the Bindu stand on a further elevated plane over and above the two lotuses. The temple at Māngādu near Madras in Tamilnadu is dedicated to a Kūrmapṛṣṭha Śricakra, which is the centre of worship and, the installation of which is attributed to Śrī Śaṁkara Bhagavatpāda. A third kind of Meru is spoken of as having all the nine cakras placed one rising above the other in nine planes. While definite models of Meruprastāra and Bhūprastāra are seen in worship in temples as well as with individuals the Kailāsaprastāra, according to learned upāsakas and devotees, is more of mental formation (mānasika bhāva) than one existing in concrete shape.

The term Prastāra also refers to the mode of worship of the deities and their bījas in the Śrīcakra (vide notes on Verse 31). Śrīcakra based on the Sodaśākṣarī or the 16 lettered Devi mantra is Meruprastāra, the cakra on the basis of the Vaśinīdevatākrama is Bhūprastāra, while the Yantra based on the Mātṛkā mantras is Kailāsaprastāra.

The worship of the Śrīcakra is commonly performed in the Samhārakrama i.e commencing from the Bhūpura and ending with the Bindu. An account of the 9 āvaraṇas in the nine cakras that constitute the Śrīcakra and the different deities therein will be of interest. The āvaraṇa devatas are but mayūkhās or rays emanating from the Devi in the Bindu-the Devi being manifest in each of the cakras.

I ĀVARANA : Bhūpuratrayam i.e., the three quadrangular lines with four openings (one in the centre of each side) :—The cakra is known as Trāilokyamohanacakra. Of these three lines, the outer prākāra (rampart) - white in colour-is the first entrance to Devi's citadel. Here reside the Siddhi Devis-Aṇimā, Laghimā, Mahimā, Īśitva, Vaśitva, Prākāmya, Bhukti, Icchā, Prāpti and Sarvakāma and guard the entrance (warding off incompetent devotees-vide verse 95). The second or middle line aruṇa (bright red) in colour, is presided over by the eight Mātṛ-Śaktis-Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Māhendrī, Cāmundā and Mahālakṣmī. The inner (third) enclave (line), yellow in colour, is the seat of the ten mudrādevis viz. Sarvasaṁkṣobhiṇī, Sarvavidrāviṇī, Sarvākarṣiṇī, Sarva-Vaśaṁkarī Sarvonmādinī, Sarvamahāṁkuśā, Sarvākhecarī, Sarvabījā, Sarvayoni, Sarvatṛkhandā-all being Anandajñānasvarupiṇīs. The devis in this Bhūpura cakra are collectively known as Prakaṭayoginis. The presiding manifestation of Devi in this cakra is known as Tripurā.

II ĀVARANA : The Soḍaśadalapadmaṃ-(16 petalled-lotus) :—(known as Sarvāśāparipūraka cakra.) This is white in colour. Collectively known as guptayoginis

sixteen Nityākalādevis reside in this cakra. They are - Kāmākarṣiṇī. Buddhyākarṣiṇī, Ahaṁkārākarṣiṇī, Śabdākarṣiṇī, Sparśākarṣiṇī, Rūpākarṣiṇī, Rasākarṣiṇī, Gandhākarṣiṇī, Cittākarṣiṇī, Dhairyākarṣiṇī, Smṛtyākarṣiṇī, Nāmākarṣiṇī, Bījākarṣiṇī, Ātmākarṣiṇī, Amṛtākarṣiṇī, and Śarīrākarṣiṇī. The presiding manifestation of Devi here is Tripureśī.

III ĀVARANA : Vasudalam or the eight-petalled lotus, known as Sarvasaṁkṣobhaṇa cakra (of red shade as of the japākusuma flower) occupied by the eight guptatara Yoginis-Ananga-Kusumā, Anangamekhalā, Anangamadanā, Anangamadanāturā, Anangarekhā, Anangaveginī, Anangāṁkuśā and Anangamālinī. Devi Tripurasundarī presides over this cakra.

IV ĀVARANA : Caturdaśāra or the fourteen angles-known as Sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka cakra. This is of the colour of the pomegranate flower. Here the fourteen Sampradāya yoginis are worshipped. They are: Sarva-Saṁkṣobhiṇī, Sarvavidrāvaṇī Sarvākarṣiṇī, Sarvāhladinī, Sarvasammohinī, Sarvastambhinī, Sarvajṛmbhiṇī, Sarvavaśaṁkarī, Sarvārañjinī, Sarvonmādinī, Sarvārthasādhinī, Sarvasampattipūraṇī, Sarvamantramayī and Sarvadvandvakṣayaṁkarī. Devi menifests Herself in this cakra as Tripuravāsinī.

V ĀVARANA : Bahirdaśāra or the outer group of ten angles known as Sarvārthasādhakacakra, is of sindūra colour, wherein the ten Kulottīrṇa yoginis have their abode. They are-Sarvasiddhipradā, Sarvasampatpradā, Sarvapriyaṁkarī, Sarvamangalakāriṇī. Sarvakāmapradā, Sarvaduḥkhavimocanī, Sarvamṛtyupraśamanī, Sarvavighnanivāriṇī Sarvāngasundarī and Sarvasaubhāgyadāyinī. Devi manifests Herself here as Tripurāsrī.

VI ĀVARANA : The Antardaśāra or inner ten angles, red like the japākusuma flower is called Sarvarakṣākaracakra. Here the resident devatas are the ten Nigarbha Yoginis-Sarvajnā, Sarvaśakti. Sarvaiśvaryapradā, Sarvajñānamayī, Sarvavyādhivināśinī, Sarvādhārasvarūpā, Sarvapāpaharā, Sarvānandamayī, Sarvarakṣāsvarūpiṇī, and Sarvepsitaphalapradā. The presiding manifestation of Devi in this cakra is Tripuramālinī.

VII ĀVARANA : The Vasukoṇa or Aṣṭakoṇa (the group of eight angles) resembling the colour of the rising sun or padmarāga and known as Sarvarogaharacakra is occupied by the eight Vāgdevatās or the Rahasyayoginis. They are—Vaśinī, Kāmeśvarī, Modinī, Vimalā, Aruṇā, Jayinī, Sarveśvarī and Kaulinī. The presiding form of Devi in this cakra is Tripurāsiddhā.

VIII ĀVARANA or TRIKONA (the innermost triangle), of the colour of bandhūka (Sembaratta in Tamil) flower, known as Sarvasiddhipradacakra. The Atirahasyayoginis-Mahākāmeśvarī, Mahāvajreśvarī and Mahābhagamālinī occupy the thrce angles. Devi manifests Herself in the Trikoṇa as Tripurāmbā. Herein Icchā, Jñāna, and Kriyā śaktis, the Sattva, Rajas and Tamo guṇas and the five activities (Kṛtyas)-Sṛṣṭi, Sthiti, Saṃhāra, Tirodhāna and Anugraha are said to be represented.

Fifteen of the Nityā devatās - Kameśvarī, Bhagamālinī, Nityaklinnā, Bherundā, Vahnivāsinī, Mahavajreśvarī, Sivadūtī, Tvaritā, Kulasundarī, Nityā, Nīlapatākā, Vijayā, Sarvamaṅgalā, Jvālāmālinī and Citkalā shine brightly in the three inner (rekhās) forming the innermost Trikoṇa (triangle), five in each side. These Nityās are worshipped in the order given above during (Śuklapakṣa) the bright half of the lunar month and in the reverse order in the dark fortnight (Kṛṣṇapakṣa).

IX ĀVARANA : The Bindu considered as the ninth cakra, called Sarvānandamaya-cakra, of the colour of the rising sun (golden red), is presided over by Mahātripurasundarī, seated on the lap of Sadāśiva, in Her transcendent glory above all the 25 tattvas (verities), shedding lustrous light and effulgence over all the cakras and the Āvaraṇa devatas residing in them. Blending in the bindu with Sadāśiva, Devi is the supreme Sādākhya tattva, and shines as the Parāśakti, the causative force of all creation, protection and destruction of the Universe.

Apart from the verse having a bearing on the form of the Śricakra cited above at the end of the first paragraph of the notes on this Śloka, details about Śrīcakra are found in the phalaśruti portion of the Lalitā-Triśatī. The Saubhāgyakhanda of the Atharvaṇa Veda also describes the Śrīcakra as formed in a similar manner, with forty three koṇas. Kaivalyāśrama details, in his Saubhāgyavardhani, the mode of drawing the Śrīcakra and describes it as follows :

"Madhyavahnispuradrūpamaṣṭadvidaśavahnikam;
Caturdaśānaladyotam śrīcakram jayate param.
Tadvahnirvasupatrābjam tadvahniḥ ṣoḍaśacchadam;
Vṛttatritayasaṁkṣobham trirekhāñcitabhūgṛham.
Tridhāmanilayam dvāracatuṣṭayasuśobhitam.
Sarvatejomayam divyam somasūryānalātmakam."

From the passages cited above it would be clear that the Bindu, the Trikoṇa, the Aṣṭakoṇa, the two sets of ten Koṇas; the fourteen angles, the eight-petalled lotus, the sixteen-petalled lotus and the three quadrangular lines (ramparts with the four openings one on each side) constitute the Śrīcakra of which four are Śivacakras and five are Śakticakras. Further, they clearly indicate the perfect union of the Śiva and Śakti and speak of this relation of Śiva and Śakti as avinābhāvasambandha i.e., the one invariably co-existent with the other, or that the one does not exist without the other.

In this verse the component parts of the Śrīcakra are given by Sri Śaṁkarācāryā as.

Caturbhiḥ śrīkaṇṭhaiḥ = 4 śiva cakras
Śivayuvatibhiḥ pañcabhiḥ = 5 śakti cakras
Vasudala = eight-petalled lotus
Kalāśra = sixteen-petalled lotus
Trivalaya = the three circular rings
Trirekhā = the three lines of Bhūpura

The 14 Koṇas (of the Caturdāśāra) the two daśāras or two sets of 10 Koṇas, (10 + 10 = 20) the Aṣṭakoṇa (eight koṇas) and the Trikoṇa, make up 14 + 10 + 10 + 8 + 1 = 43 angles or Koṇas. Treating the Bindu as the centrifugal Koṇa, the Ācārya says that the angles of Śrīcakra are 44. It may be seen that in the Lalitā Triśatī phalaśruti too the importance of the Bindu is stressed.

In the passage quoted from the Saubhāgyavardhanī, the Śrīcakra is described as resplendent essentially of the form of the Moon (Soma), the Sun (Sūrya) and Fire (Agni). The form of the Moon with his 16 kalās and 27 constellations (Nakṣatras) form the 43 konas; the twelve kalās of the Sun, his twelve Mūrtis, the twelve rāśis, the three Vedas (Rk, Yajus and Sāman) and the three Svaras (Udātta, Anudātta and Svarita), make the 43 konas representing the Sun; and the innermost triangle (Trikoṇa) the expanding brilliance of the bindu together with its further extension as the eight mūrtis of fire into the Aṣṭakoṇa, as its ten kalās in the Antardaśāra, as its Vibhūtis in the Bahirdaśāra, and as the fourteen worlds (consisting of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) in the caturdaśāra making up 43 koṇas represent Fire. (cf. Saubhāgyavardhanī, supra, p. 128)

The Devi's resting place in the centre of the Candramaṇḍala īs also taken into account by Śri Śaṁkarācārya in making up the forty-four koṇas mentioned in that reading. Kaivalyāśrama adds that the Śrīcakra, with the Bindu, the Trikoṇa, the Aṣṭakoṇa, the two sets of ten Koṇas, the caturdaśāra, the celestial eight-petalled and sixteen-petalled lotuses, the three Mekhalās (circles) and the three quadrangular lines with the gateways on the four sides, in the abode of the Parāśakti, represent the 36 tattvās (verities). Here also we find the Bindu being taken into account.

That Bhagavatpāda Sri Śaṁkarācārya has himself consecrated Śrīcakras at various shrines is evident from the biographical accounts of the Great Preceptor. That Śrīcakra was carved in front of Devi Kāmākṣi at Kānci, one of the seven cities of liberation (mokṣapuris), is spoken of in the Śaṅkaravijayas and other works also.

VERSE—12.

Oh, Daughter of the snow-clad Mountain (Himālaya)! The best of thinkers—Brahma and others—are at great pains to find a suitable comparison to Thy beauty. Even the celestial damsels, out of great eagerness to get a glimpse of Thy splendour, mentally attain a condition of absorption into Siva, which is unobtainable even by penance.

This verse extols Devi's beauty. Having described the Śrīcakra, which represents a stūla (gross) form of Devi in the preceding verse, Bhagavatpāda brīngs out the Śiva-Śakti

* The tattvas are reckoned as 36, 26, 51, 96 etc., by different schools,

sāmarasya in this verse. Brahmā who created many beautiful things, Viṣṇu, Indra and others although endowed with fertile imagination, could find no object fit to stand comparison with Devi's beauty. Even the beauty of celestial damsels such as, Rambhā or Ūrvaśī etc., is but a fraction of Devi's beauty. Dejected at their own splendour, they are eager to have a glimpse of Devi's magnificent beauty at close quarters. But this privilege is Śiva's alone. Hence out of a keen desire to have a glance at Devi, these celestial damsels seek by meditation to have Śivasāyujya or mental absorption into Śiva's form; which is not obtainable even by penance and severe austerities. Forsaking all heavenly enjoyments, they attain identity (Sāyujya) with Śiva by deep meditation on Devi, for the purpose of glancing at the Devi's matchless beauty. The word 'Amaralalanā' (in the verse) is also interpreted as 'Apratihata Vaibhavāḥ' i.e., even those possessing divine powers attain sāyujya only by meditation on Devi.

VERSE—13.

Youthful maidens, with their braids of hair loosened and dropping, the garments over their breasts falling down, their girdles breaking off suddenly and their silken robes slipping down, run in hundreds after a man, who is far advanced in years, uncouth to look at, and incapable of amorous sport, but has fallen within the ambit of Thy side-glances.

Kāma (love) when not at variance with Dharma (righteous conduct) is a puruṣārtha or goal of human life, sought and attained through Devi's grace, which confers (unlike the grace of other deities) bliss in this world as also in the next. In this verse, the greatness of Devi's side-glance in vouchsafing worldly pleasures is praised. Her gracious look askance is so powerful that even the impossible becomes easily possible. Even an old, repulsive, impotent person looks a Cupid (Manmatha) infatuating young maidens, when Devi's divine grace descends on him. In fine, the person or thing which is subjected to Devi's glances becomes a coveted one desired and loved by all alike.

Coming as it does from the all-knowing, saint Bhagavatpāda, the description in the latter half of the verse must be taken to suggest something beyond its literal significance. The Upaniṣads are the maidens referred to. They lead the seeker to the Supreme Being the divine grace having conferred on the devotee oneness with that Supreme. The Upaniṣads i.e., the maidens run after him in the belief that he is none other than the Brahman. According to some, this verse involves a Mādana Prayoga, for the infatuation of desired ladies.

VERSE—14.

Fifty-six rays shine in the Muladhara comprised of the element of Earth (Prthvi tattva), fifty-two rays shine in the Manipūra of the essence of Water (Āpatattva), sixty-two in the Svādhisthāna (the Agni or Tejas-tattva) being of the nature of Fire, fitty-two in the Anāhata of the character of Air (Vayu-tattva); seventy-two rays in the Visuddhi of the form of Ether (Akasa-tattva) and sixty-four in the Ajna (manas-tattva). Far above all these shine the pair of Thy lotus feet.

Having described the poteney of the Devi's sideglance, the glorious brilliance of her lotus-like feet resting in the Sahasrāra or the thousand-petalled lotus, from which the Moon, Sun and Fire (Agni) derīve their light and splendour, is described in this verse.

The six psychic planes (cakras) in the Microcosm comprising of the principles (tattvas) of Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether and Mind are grouped into three regions (Khaṇḍas) with a granthi (Knot) above each region. Thus the Mūlādhāra and the Svādhiṣṭhāna form the Agnikhaṇḍa with the Rudragranthi (Knot of Rudra) above Svādhiṣṭhāna. Agni or Fire existing on this knot, envelops the two cakras or planes below with his 108 rays, 56 shining on the Mūlādhāra and 52 on the Svādhiṣṭhāna. The Maṇipūra and the Anāhata cakras constitute the Sūrya Khaṇḍa with the Viṣṇu-granthi (knot) above the Anāhata, whence the Sun sheds his 116 rays, 62 on the Maṇipūrā and 54 on the Anāhata. The Viśuddha and Ājñā cakras form the Somakhaṇḍa. Above the Ājnā is the Brahmagranthi. The Moon presiding over this granthi, pervades this region with his 136 rays, 72 shining on the Viśuddhi cakra and 64 on the Ajñā cakra.

Thus the Moon, the Sun and Fire pervade the entire universe, consisting of innumerable microcosms and macrocosms with mayūkhās (rays of light) derived from Devi's feet.

Owing to the identity (or blazing aspect) of the Sun and Agni and the entry of the latter into the sphere of the former, the Sun leaving the Maṇipūra cakra sheds his rays of light on the Svādhiṣṭhāna, and there is an overlapping of the Sun's sphere into that of Agni and vice versa. This is indicative of the Sun's creating the Saṃvarta clouds to assuage the fire caused at the time of dissolution (pralaya, vide verse 39 infra).

Śrividyā is known as Candrakalā-Vidyā. The days representing the sixteen phases (Kalās) of the Moon constitute the days of the lunar month. These tithis are 360 in a

lunar year. This year (which is also the Kāla-Śakti) is considered to be the Prajāpati or Creator who created the Marīcis and others entrusted with creation, sustenance and dissolution of the Universe consisting of numerous microcosms and macrocosms. The rays emanating from Devi's feet, absorbed by the Moon, Sun and Fire illuminate the respective spheres. They derive their light and power from Devi's feet which transcend the entire universe and shine far above them. This is corroborated by the Śruti-texts 'Lokasya dvāraṃ arcimat pavitraṃ', 'Tameva bhāntaṃ anubhāti sarvam, Tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṃ vibhāti.' The sun brightens the universe by day, the moon by night and Agni at dawn and dusk.

The Kalās (rays) of the Moon in the Sahasrāra (the thousand-petalled lotus) are unchanging and ever-shining. The apparent dimunition or elongation of the tithis which represent the Kalās relate to the Moon at the Ājnā region and is only due to the appearance and disappearance of the Kalās from view. The six seasons of the year (ṛtus) are also considered to be caused as the result of the association of these Mayūkhās with the six cakras.

According to some commentators this verse refers to the worshīp of the Āvaraṇa Devatas (deities in the different corners and enclosures) of the Śrīcakra. When Śiva is given greater prominence in spiritual discipline it is called Śāmbhava Tantra; and when Śakti is of greater importance it is known as Śakti Tantra. When, according to the fruits of the karma of Jīvas, the desire to create arises in Brahman, the Parācitśakti manifests Herself and reaches the eyebrow in the microcosm. She is then the presiding deity of Majja (marrow). Emanating from her, Icchā of four forms with 36 mayūkhās (rays) occupies the Viśuddhicakra at the region of the throat. Arising from Icchā, jñāna of five kinds resides in the Anāhata—the heart region with 27 rays. From jñāna results Kriyā of four kinds with 31 rays presiding over the Śvādhiṣṭhāna. Kuṇḍalinī becomes manifest from Kriyā and presiding over Maṇipūra shines with 26 rays. Matṛkā born of Kuṇḍalinī, the deity of Pṛthvitattva resides in the Mūlādhāra with 28 rays. The Mānasa or Ājnā region is resplendent with 32 rays. These rays emanating from Śiva and Śakti (180 X 2 = 360), with the six Śaktis, Parā and others and their deities, (the rays shining from Devi's feet) are 372 in number. Thus emanating from Majjā Devi, Iccha, Jñāna, Kriyā, Kuṇḍalinī and Matṛkā, the entire animate and inanimate universe manifests itself through them, particularly through the Kuṇḍalinī and Mātṛkā.

The Mayūkhās in the six cakras as representing the tattvas are each presided over by a deity. As manifestations of Śiva and Śakti the number of rays in each cakra is doubled. They are worshipped externally in a ṣaṭkoṇa or six-angled cakra (yantra) drawn on a base, or internally in a cakra imagined in the head of the devotee or in the six cakras in the microcosm. Details of the external cakra worshipped and the internal mode of worship together with the tattvas pertaining to each of the cakras are noted below :

EXTERNAL WORSHIP

Cakra	No. of rays in the six angles (mayukhās)	Siva's	Sakti's	Total	Tattvas
Pārthiva (Earth)	4, 5, 6, 4, 5, 4 =	28 +	28	56	5 Tanmātras, 5 elements, 5 Jñānendriyas, 5 Kārmendriyas Manas (mind) Buddhi (intellect) citta (Reasoning) ahamkara (ego) Kāla (time), Prakṛti (nature) Puruṣa and Mahat Total 28 x 2 = 56
Āpya (Water)	4, 5, 6, 4, 5, 3 =	26 +	26	52	5 Elements, 5 Jñānendriyas 5 Karmendriyas, Objects of these indriyas (senses 5 + 5 = 10) and Manas (mind) Total = 26 x 2 = 52
Taijasa (Fire)	5, 5, 6, 4, 5, 6 =	31 +	31	62	5 elements, 5 tanmātras, 5 Jñānendriyas, 5 Objeects of the Jñānendriyas, 5 Karmendriyas, 5 objects of the Karmendriyas and Manas (Mind)—total 31 x 2 = 62
Vāyavya (Air)	4, 5, 6, 4, 5, 3 =	27 +	27	54	5 Tanmātras, 5 Elements, 5 Jnānendriyas, 5 Karmendriyas, Manas (mind) Buddhi (intellect) citta (reasoning) ahamkāra (ego) Kāla (Time), Prakrti (nature) and Purusa-Total 27 x 2 = 54
Nābhasa or ākāśa (Atmosphere or Ether)	6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6 =	36 +	36	72	Śiva, Śakti, Śādāśiva, Īsvara, Śuddhavidyā, Māyā, Kālā, Vidyā Rāga, Kāla, Niyati, Puruṣa, Prakrti, Ahamkāra, Mānasa Buddhi, 5 Jñānendriyas, 5 Karmendriyas, 5 elements, Śabda (sound) Sparśa (Touch), Rūpa (colour) Rasa (taste), Gandha (smell)

EXTERNAL WORSHIP—(*Contd.*)

Cakra	No. of Rays in the six angles (mayukhās)	Siva's	Sakti's	Total	Tattvas
Manasa or Ājña (Mind)	4, 5, 4, 7, 4, 8 =	32 +	32	64	Parā Paśyantī, Madhyamā, Vaikharī Iccha (desire) of 5 kinds, Jñānā (knowledge) of 4 kinds, Kriyā (action) of 7 kinds, Kundalinī of 4 Bhūmikas and the Mātṛkas in 8 vargas.

N. B. According to Kameśvara Śuri author of the Aruṇāmodinī the Mānasa tattvas constitute the same tattvas as of the Nābhasa omitting the four Śiva, Śakti, Sadaśiva and Īśvara tattvas.

INTERNAL WORSHIP

Cakra	Region	Mayukhas in petals (rays) *
Pārthiva (Earth)	Mūlādhāra	7 in each petal (7 x 5 = 28)
Āpya (Water)	Maṇipūra	4,4,6,4,5,3 in six petals Total 26
Taijasa (Fire)	Svādhiṣṭhāna	3 in each of 9 petals (27) and 4 in the 10th petal 27 + 4 = 31.
Vāyavya (Air)	Anāhata	3 in each of the first, sixth and ninth dalas, and in each of the rech; or 3 in each of the first, sixth and twelfth petals (3 x 3 = 9) and 2 in each of the rest (2 x 9 = 18) = 9 + 18 = 27
Nābhasa (Ether)	Viśuddha	4 each in the first and 16th petals (4 x 2 = 8) and 2 in each of the rest of 14 (2 x 14 = 28) 8 + 28 = 36
Mānasa (Mind)	Ājñā	4 Groups of 4 in each of the petals (4 x 4 x 2) = 32

* *N. B.*—The total numbers in this column should be doubled for corresponding rays of Śiva and Śakti.

The meditation of these Mayūkhas as Matṛkās or letters of the alphabet (of the Sanskrit language) grouped with bijākṣaras (mystic syllables of Mantra) are indicated thus :

1. Pārthivatattva in Mūlādhāra :

The 50 letters ** of the alphabet A to Ha together with the bījākṣaras 'Aiṃ' 'Hrīṃ', 'Śrīm', 'Aim', 'Klīm' 'Sāuḥ' = Total 56

2. Āpva tattva in Maṇipūra :

The 50 letters from 'A' to 'Ha' with 'Sauṃ' and 'Śrīṃ'—total 52

3. Taiiasa tattva in Svādhiṣthāna :

The 50 letters with the 14th letter 'au' and the bijās 'Haṃ' and 'Saḥ' - repeated 4 times (3 x 4 = 12) total 62

4. Vāyavya in Anāhata :

The 50 letters with the 4 semi-vowels 'yam' 'raṃ' 'laṃ' and 'vaṃ'—Total 54

5. Ākāśa (Nābhasa) in Viśuddha :

The vowels except Am and Aḥ repeated five times and the bijās 'Aim' and "Hrīm" Total 72

6. Mānasa in Ajñā :

(Sixteen vowels repeated 4 times) (16 x 4 = 64)

N. B. These 360 (some letters, some syllables) should be meditated upon along with 'Haṃ' and 'Saḥ', in the head or in the microcosm. Initiation into the details of the Ṣaḍanvaya Śambhava worship is to be had from a knowledgeable preceptor (guru).

Presiding over all the deities manifesting the tattvās, making up the universe comprising of the Sun, Moon and Fire, the Citśakti (Devi) residing in Jyotsnāloka, (in the ever resplendent region) of Sahasrāra (thousand-petalled lotus) is transcendant and illuminates the innumerable worlds below, by the splendour of Her feet. The Sun, the Moon and Agni derive their light from those feet and disperse them over the Universe. In fine the Mayūkhās (rays) emanating from Devi's lustrous feet are infinite.

Another view is that the Nirvānacarana of Brahman (the liberating feet of the Absolute), of the nature of eternal bliss is glowing resplendently in the Sahasrāra over and above all these rays which shine through Its grace and glory.

** The number of letters in the Sanskrit alphabet is reckoned differently as 50, 51 or 54.

VERSE--15.

How will not words (speech) sweet as honey, milk and grapes, emanate from the tongue of such as have bowed even once before Thee, whose form is as clear and bright as the moon-light of the Saradritu (autumnal moon) whose head is adorned with a crown, whose matted hair-locks have a crescent-moon on them and whose four hands hold the poses of bestowing boons and affording protection from fear, a string of crystal beads (sphatika) and a book.

Having described the glory of Devi's lotus feet Śrī Saṁkarācārya extols in this and the succeeding verses the several forms when being worshipped in which, she confers specific benefits on the devotee. In this śloka the sātvic form in which She is to be meditated upon through the first Vāgbhava Kuta of the Pañcadāśākṣarī (the first group of the 15-lettered Devi mantra) is elucidated.

'Sarajjyōtsnāsuddhām' - The autumnal moon in the sky clear after the cessation of rains, is full and spotless. The other reading 'Subhrām' would mean 'white' or resplendent, Devi is to be meditated upon as white in complexion like that of the autumnāl moon, with her plaited hair adorned by the crescent moon and with a jewelled crown on her head. The whiteness of complexion is indicative of the Sātvic aspect, characteristic of learning and knowledge. The plaited hair (jāṭajūṭa) itself may be taken to be the crown with the crescent moon as crest jewel - Devi being one with Siva who has a jatā with a crescent moon on it. Devi has a string (akṣamālā) of crystal beeds (ghutikā) or according to another reading a crystal goblet (ghatikā) in her upper right hand and a book in her left upper hand. Her lower right hand is in the pose of conferring boons (varada) while the lower left hand is posed as affording security form fear (abhayada). One who meditates on Devi in this form is blessed with expression excelling in sweetness, honey, milk and grapes. In other words the devotee attains all knowledge and becomes a great poet and speaker. The negative form in which the question is posed (in the third line of the verse) indicates certainty. The idea is that without such meditation, learning and poesy could not be expected to be attained.

The ghutikā or akṣamāla representing the letters of the alphabet indicates the Śabdaprapanca (world of names), the book denotes the Arthaprapanca (objeets), the Abhayamudra denotes anarthanivrtti, i.e., the removal of all ills concomitant with human existence and the varamudra signifies ānandaprāpti or the attainment of unalloyed bliss. The underlying significance is that Devi who is the substratum of the universe of names (Sabda or name) and forms (artha or rupa) if meditated upon in this form through the sātvic aspect of the Vāgbhavakūta, vouchsafes knowledge and frees the devotee from the root-cause of all earthly ills (abhaya) and confers Infinite Bliss (Vara) in this world and in the one hereafter.

There seems to be an apparent contradiction between the dscription of Devi as in Verse No. 4 and the one found in this verse. Devi's form as stated in this verse is evidently intended for a specific purpose-the attainment of knowledge, eloquence, poesy, etc., while Devi's transcendental form as found in Verse-4, is to be contemplated and worshipped for attaining unlimited benefits including liberation from birth (mokṣa). Acyutananda reads in this prayoga, meditation on Devi as Kriyāśakti (the source of speech) which is one of the many forms in which Devi manifests Herself.

The practice (Sādhana) of meditating through the Vāgbhava Kūta is explained similarly in the fourth Visrāma of the Vāmakeśvara Tantra and in the Jnānarṇāva.

" Vāgbhavākhyāṃ japedvidyāṃ vāgīśīṃ samsmaran budhaḥ ;
Karpūrādhavalāṃ śubhrapuṣpābharaṇabhūṣitāṃ.
Atyantaśubhravasanāṃ vajramauktikabhūṣaṇāṃ ;
Muktāphalāmaṇijapamālālasatkarāṃ.
Pustakaṃ varadānam ca dadhatīmabhayapradāṃ ;
Evaṃ dhāyayan maheśāni sarvavidyādhipo bhavet.

VERSE—16.

The few virtuous men who worship Thee, as red in colour, as of the rising Sun, causing the lotus buds (heart lotuses) of the greatest poets to bloom, enables them to delight the assemblage of wise critics with their speech, resembling that of Brahma's beloved Sarasvati, exuberant with the flow of highly delectable sentiment of love.

The worship of Devi, as described in the previous verse as of red complexion, the colour being similar to that of the rising morning Sun is commended in this verse as conducive to the attainment of poetic diction replete with the exuberance of sentiments. This is another Sārasvataprayoga involving meditation on Devi through the Vāgbhava-kūta in its rājasic aspect. Some treat this verse as relating to the Icchāśakti propitiated through the Kāmarāja Kūta of the Pancadaśākṣarī (the fifteen-lettered Devi mantra).

Devi is generally described and meditated upon as red in colour in such terms as Sindūrārunavigrahām, Aruṇam Karuṇātarangitākṣīm, Sarvāruṇā, Nijārunaprabhāpūramajjad-brahmāṇḍa maṇḍalā, Lākṣārasasavarṇābhā etc. (of Lalitāsahasranāma and Lalitātriśatī stotras). The Upaniṣad refers to Devi as " Ādi-Śaktirarunā Viśvajanyā ".

Even as the rising Sun delights the red lotuses and makes them blossom, Devi with Her red effulgence delights the hearts (heart lotuses) of the greatest of poets such as Brahmā and others. The word ' Arunā ' is also interpreted as the Śakti Arunā, an aspect of Devi.

The devotee meditating on Devi in this form is blessed with poesy of the highest order, resembling that of Sarasvatī, the Goddess of all Learning, poesy replete with the delectable sentiment of love (the foremost among the nine sentiments in literary art) ever flowing in fresher forms. The term 'taruṇatara' is interpreted as 'more and more fresh' 'very delightful' and also 'as in the young'.

Further, one who medidates upon Devi in this manner and gains mastery over charming speech, would with his literary masterpieces be able to delight an audience of like-minded poets and scholars (sahṛdayas) and competent critics possessing literary skill of a high order. The other reading 'Sabhārañjanam' would mean 'assemblage of sahṛdaya (equally reputed critics).

Thc Vāmakeśvara Tantra as quoted brlow, provides another kind of description of Devi for Sārasvataprayoga. As described therein, She has eight hands-six of them holding the noose (pāśa), the goad (aṅkuśa), the bow (Dhanus), the arrows (bāna) the book Pustaka) and the rosary of beads respectively and two others in the sccurity-affording (abhaaya) and boon-conferring (Varada) poses; and she sporting in the ocean of nectar. Worshipping Devi in this form, the devotee can always entertain an audience interested in enjoying the erotic sentiment in literature, for all time.

" Aruṇākhyāṃ bhagavatīṃ aruṇābhāṃ vicintayet;
Pāśāṅkuśadharāṃ devīṃ dhanurbāṇadharāṃ śivāṃ.
Varadābhayahastāṃ ca pustakākṣasragarvitāṃ;
Aṣtabāhuṃ trinayanāṃ khelantīmamṛtāmbudhau.
Sā karotyeva śṛṅgārarasāsvādanalampatān;
Sabhāsadassadā sarvān sādhakendraḥ sabhāstale."

Such a devotee becomes Sarasvati in masculine form as it were and pleases the audience with literary pieces abounding in the sentiment of love. Devi constituting the Matṛkas (letters of the alphabet) is of the form of Saraswati and confers on him the gift of delicious poetry replete with emotional sentimint. By the force of the red colour in which She is meditated upon, the sentiment in the devotee's speech or compositions is predominantly erotic. (Śṛṅgārarasapradhāna).

VERSE—17.

He who meditates on Thee together with the progenitors of speech, Vasini and others who have the brilliant lustre of the fresh-cut moonstone, becomes the author of great epic poems, sweetened by styic and celicious like the fragrance of the lotus-like mouth of the Goddess of speech (Sarasvatii).

Another Sārasvata-prayoga is propounded in this verse which would confer on the devotee capacity to produce excellent poetic compositions (Mahākāvyas) like those of

Vālmīki and Kālidāsa. Such a devotee would acquire the ability to write exquisite mahākāvyas excelling in diction, style, melody, sentiments and alaṅkāras (figures of speech). Their writings would appear to have been produced by Sarasvatī herself.

Devi is of the form of the Matṛkas or the letters of the alphabet (Matṛkātmikā). These letters are the 15 vowels and 7 groups (vargas) of five consonants each, making altogether 8 groups. These groups commence with A, Ka, Ca, Ṭa, Ta, Pa, Ya and Śa respectively. The devotee has to contemplate upon Devi as manifesting Herself in the form of these eight groups of letters, together with the presiding deities, the eight vaśinīs and the twelve yoginīs (as detailed below) in the eight cakras viz. the four Śiva Cakras, the aṣtakoṇa, the two daśāras and the caturdaśāra, as prescribed in the following verse :—

" Mātṛkāṃ vaśinīyuktāṃ yoginībhiḥ samanvitāṃ ;
Gandhākarṣiṇīyuktāṃ samsmaret tripurāmbikāṃ."

The presiding deities mentioned are the 8 Vāgdevatas-Vaśinī, Kāmeśvarī, Modinī, Vimalā, Aruṇā, Jayinī, Sarveśvarī, and Kaulinī; the twelve yoginis known as Vidyā, Becikā, Mocikā Aṃrtā, Dīpikā, Jñānā, Āpyāyinī, Vyāpinī, Medhā, Vyomarūpā, Siddhirūpā and Lakṣmī. Besides the above twenty, the presiding deities of smell, taste, colour and touch viz. Gandhākarṣiṇī, Rasākarṣiṇī, Rūpākarṣiṇī and Sparsākarṣiṇī guarding the openings in the Bhūpura (quadrangular lines of Śrīcakra), are also included in this meditation of Devi. This mode of meditation is known as Bhūprastāra, (a form of worship which is detailed further under vorse 31).

The Devi with these deities - Her aspects - in Her form of Mātṛkās, confers on the devotee the gift of poetic genius and marvellous ability in literary art.

VERSE—18.

How many celestial courtesans including Urvasi, with eyes bashful like those of frightened deer of the forest, do not become fascinated by one who meditates on the entire Heaven and Earth as submerged in the redness of the lustre of Thy body resembling the splendour of the rising (moning) Sun's rays ?

This verse introduces a mādanaprayoga for attracting a lady desired by the devotee, through the Kāmarājakūta of the 'Pancadaśākṣari mantra. Thiṣ is in the nature of worshipping Devi in the form of Icchāśakti. 'Aruṇima' in the word 'Aruṇimānimagnām' means the radiance which emanates from the lustrous person of Devi and envelopes the entire universe. The splendour of this radiance is likened to the shining lustre of the rising Sun (tarunataraṇiśri). The compound 'aruṇimanimagnām' would mean 'immersed in the ocean of red lac'. In the Lalitāsahasranāma occurs the name (Taruṇādityapātalā). Bhāskararāya interprets taruṇa as 'white mixed with red as of the midday Sun'.

Similar references are found in the āgama.

" Yāvakābdhau nimagnāṃ bhūmiṃ yo devīṃ bhūmiṃ vicintayet;
Tasya sarvāvaśam yānti yā tāstrilokyavanitā dhruvaṃ."

Different colurs are attributed to Devi according to the object of the meditation as may be seen in the passage below :

" Śāntā dhavalavarṇābhā mokṣadharmaprakalpane;
Vaśye rajavaśye ca janavaśye ca pāṭalā.
Pītā dhanasya sādhyattvau kṛṣṇā mārakarmaṇi;
Babhrūrvidveṣaṇe proktā sṛṅgāre pātalākṛtiḥ
Sarvavarṇā sarvalabhe dhyāyet jyotirmayā parā."

The comparison of the eyes of the celestial damsels with those of the unfamiliar, timid wild gazelle frightened at the sight of man - is intended to suggest that though having unwinking eyes, the celestial damsels exhibit restlessness in their eyes because of the influence of passion. That all celestial courtesans without exception are attracted by this votary is indicated by the introduction of the interrogative in the negative form in the last line of the verse.

The universe being drowned in the bright red hue of Devi is referred to in the Lalitāsahasranāma also in the nāme, 'Nijāruṇaprabhāpūramajjadbrahmāṇḍamaṇḍalā'. This is explained thus :—

" Svakiyo yo aruṇābhā aruṇaprabhāyāḥ raśmikānteḥ pūraḥ pravāhaḥ,
tasminmajjati tadabhedena bhāsamānāni brahmāṇḍānāṃ maṇḍalāni yasyāḥ sa. "

The word, 'drowning', refers to the appearance of the Universe as identical with Devi. The Upaniṣadic saying, "Lohityametasya sarvasya vimarśaḥ', supports this view. The redness enveloping the universe is the Vimarśa of the Cit (consciousness) in the 'akhaṇḍākāravṛtti'.

The reference to 'Gaṇikas' (courtesans) is significant. A prayoga of thīs nature to achieve the Kāmapuruṣārtha may be considered inconsistent with the tantric concept that all women (Suvāsinis) are but manifestations of Devi who is pleased with worship offered to them as can be gleaned from the following :—

" Vidyāḥ samastāstava devi bhedāḥ;
Striyaḥ samastāḥ sakalā Jagatsu."
—(Markaṇḍeya purāna, Saptaśati)

The Lalitāsahasranāma has a name for Devi as 'Suvāsinyarcanaprītā'. Apparently such a prayoga could therefore be conceived of in respect of 'Gaṇikas' (celestial damsels) only.

VERSE—19.

Oh Queen of Hara! That one who meditates on Thy Kamakala, treating Thy face as the Bindu, the pair of breasts under it and the half of the letter 'H' below it, at once impassions women, is but a trifle: he swiftly entices the Triloki (three worlds) that has the sun and the moon for her breasts.

This verse is of particular significance to Śrīvidyā devotees. To the worldly-minded seeker, it explains a prayoga for fascinating women, and in its deeper sense expounds the Kāmakalā-dhyāna, which is the core of Śrīvidyā worship—meditation on the Devi as the kinetic creatrix of the universe. Kāma (or desire) has been included among the puruṣārthas along with artha as an auxiliary to Dharma eventually leading to Mokṣa (Salvation) through the cessation of the cycle of births and deaths. When the Devi's grace is bestowed on the votary, even Kāma leads him to Mokṣa as stated by the sage Durvasas as "Strīsaṅgamo mocati".

Lakṣmīdhara and Kāmeśvara Sūri have in their commentaries furnished according to the prima facie meaning of this verse, as expounding a mādanaprayoga, meditative procedures for the fascination of a woman desired by the devotee.

Bindu : Bindusthāna—The bindu is the centre of Śrīcakra. The face is to be thought of in the Bindu. Below it, the two bindus i.e., the Trikoṇa is to be considered as the pair of breasts and below both, the Yoni of the shape of Ekara (e) which resembles the lower half of (Hakāra) the letter Ha. Manmatha-Kalā is Kāmakalā i.e., the Icchā Śakti of the Devi manifest in the Kāmarāja Kūta. One who meditates on this Kūta, thinking of the face of Devi in the Bindu, the pair of breasts below it and the yoni under them not only impassions young damsels but swiftly swirls, as it were, the universe comprising of the three worlds. The Rudra-Yāmala says that Devi shines in the form of Kāmarāja-Kūta with the Heaven as her face, the Moon and the Sun as her breasts, the Meru as her garland, the Earth as her feet and the Nether world as her stepping place. The Śruti also confirms this aspect as he who propitiates the Kāmakalā Bīja 'Klīm' after the 'K' and 'L' i.e., 'Īm' does not reach the worlds acquired by good deeds and austerities (Puṇya) but that he gains the knowledge of the Nirguṇa Brahman and attains mokṣa here and now.

Laksmidhara's commentary provides for the contemplation of the face etc. of the woman to be attached in the Bindu, Trikona etc., He also furnishes a few additional prayogas and refers to the Sanatkumāra Samhita for some prayogas for the fascination of women. Indian tradition has always viewed Kāma as a puruṣārtha, only so long as it does not conflict with Dharma and serves as an aid to it. It would appear inconceivable that the Bhagavatpāda would have intended to expound in this śloka a devotional procedure for attracting women in general. As seen in the previous verse, wherein the prayoga was confined to the attraction of courtesans only, this verse could at best, be deemed as having reference to the taming of a shrewish wife.

Kaivalyāśrama offers a quite different explanation. Kāmakalā means the splendour of Kāmarāja-Kūta or the Kāmabījā. This bija (Klīm) bereft of the 'K' and 'L' is the

fourth vowel, Ī, which (in the Nagari Script) consists of three bindus or points of which one is the Sun, the other two are Fire and the Moon. The meditation is to be on the face, as the Sun, the breasts as those of Fire and Moon and the half of 'Ha' or Ekara (e) as the Yoni-the cause of creation.

Hakārārdhaṁ : The Bīja 'Ha' is interpreted as Ravi, Śiva and Hamsaḥ on the basis of Verse 32. Omitting the consonants, 'R' and 'V' in Ravi and 'S' and 'V' in 'Śiva' the resultant Bija is 'I' and 'A' which together compound into 'E' which is indicative of the Yoni. Omitting, the 'H' and 'S' in 'Hamsaḥ the resultant bija is 'AṀ' and Aḥ'. The bindu and svara herein are to be meditated on bindu as face, the two bindus as the breasts and below it, the manmathakalā viz., E (Ekara). The term 'Yoni' here means 'the cause or source of creation'. While commenting on the nāma, 'Kāmakalārupā' in the Lalita Sahasranāma, Śrī Bhāskararāya observes :—

'Bindutrayaṁ hārdakalā cetyatra prathamō bīnduḥ Kāmākhyaśca-
ramā kalā ceti pratyāhāranyāyena kāmakaletyucyate-
Tasyāḥ svarūpaṁ 'sphutaśakti samāgamabījaṅkura-
rūpinī parāśaktiḥ'—ityārabhya, kāmaḥ kamanīyatayā
Kalā ca dahanenduvigrahāu bindū, ityantena nirṇītaṁ
kāmakalāvilāse tadrūpā ityarthaḥ.

'Kāma or creative will (Icchā) is both Śiva and Devi, and Kalā is their manifestation. The gist of these texts is furnished by Kaivalyāśrama in his commentary.

Sri Bhāskararāya explains the prayoga thus :—The secret letter 'ī' (ee) known as Kāmakalā in Srīvidyā, has three parts. The top one is Kāma and below it are two points of the nature of Moon and fire, further below it is the half of the letter 'Ha' known as Kalā. In the microcasm also, there are three parts—head to the neck, neck to the heart and from the heart to the genitals, the other limbs being included in these three main divisions. The meditation then proceeds on the letters of the mantra as developing into the form of Devi and then identifying oneself with Devi. Kāma as a puruṣārtha (goal of life) being given precedence along with other two puruṣārthas is suggestive of inferiority of their effect as compared with mokṣa as noted below :—

"Idṛśaṁ yadakṣaraṁ vyāpakaṁ brahma tadeva tattveṣu
sapadārtheṣu pravare śreṣthaṁ pāramārthike yāvat. Nijam svakīyaṁ
deham svarūpamapi tadabhinnam cintayedityarthaḥ. Ikāraśca
binduvisargātmanaḥ śivaśaktyoḥ sāmarasyarūpasya svātmatvena
bhāvanāyāṁ paramānandānubhava iti."

Kāmakalādhyāna in this form is yet a gross form of meditation. Different ways have been suggested in various texts. In essence it is a meditation of the Citśakti (consciousness supreme) in the devotee's body, from the mūlādhāra to the Sahaśrāra, identifying oneself as not different from Siva and the Sakti in the initial stage of desire to create (unmanifested), and the three bindus in the Devi's body as threefold manifestations viz., Icchā, Jñāna and Kriyā—Moon, Sun and Fire, Rajas, Satva and Tamas, Brahma,

Viṣṇu and Rudra. In this method of meditation, the bindu is Brahma of Rajoguṇa (in the face), the two breasts are Viṣṇu and Rudra of sattva and tamo guṇas in the heart. Below them Citśakti comprehending all these is to be medidated upon. The Sādhaka has then to think of his own body as such Kāmakalā. The fruit of such meditation is nothing short of mokṣa (liberation) as assumed by the Bhagavatpāda in another context as follows :—

" Mahāmantrarājāntabījaṁ parākhyaṁ svatonyastabindusvayaṁ nyasta hārdam
Bhavadvaktravakṣojaguhyābhirāmaṁ svarūpaṁ sakṛdbhāvayet sa tvameva.
Tathānye vikalpeṣu nirviṇṇacittāh samādhāya bindutrayaṁ te,
Parānandasandhānasindhau nimagnāḥ punargarbharandhram
na paśyanti dhīrāh."

The complete identification of one's self with the Supreme and the universe —meditating on the pratyāhara—"ahaṁ" (I) as in :—

"Vande tāmahaṁ akṣagyāṁ kṣakārākṣhararūpīṇīṁ"—(Vāmakeśvara Tantra)

Tantric texts ban the open exposition of the 'Kāmakalā Vidyā' which to be effective needs initiation by a guru alone. Trilokī: the three worlds. The entire universe is personified as a lady having the Moon and the Sun for her breasts. This would suggest that this prayoga is intended for men only to control or captivate women and not vice versa. 'Bhrāmayati': swirls or captivates. The root 'bhram' meaning "to err" from which the causal form 'bhrāmayati' has been formed, may also mean "cause to err". The suggestion is that a devotee meditating as aforesaid realises the universe to be illusory, or according to Tāntrikas, the bheda or difference between the Supreme and the universe as bhrama, an erroneous cognition. All this is to be meditated on. In his commentary on the following ṛk in the Tripuropaniṣat,

"Dvāmaṇḍalā dvāstanā bimbamekaṁ mukhaṁ cādhastrīṇī guhyā sadanāni;
Kāmīṁ kalāṁ kāmyarūpāṁ viditvā naro jāyate kāmarūpaśca kāmyaḥ",

Sri Bhāskarārāya interprets 'bimbaṁ' as 'bindu' on the authority of Bhagavatpāda's reference to Bindu in this śloka. According to his reading of this Upaniṣadic text, the 'bindu' refers to the six cakras from the bindu to the fourteen-angled cakra thought of as 'one' (Ekam). The eight and sixteen-petalled lotuses are 'dvāmaṇḍala' (two breasts) and the three Bhūpuras, the half of the Hakāra. The devotee has to meditate on Devi as manifest in the Śrīcakra to attain universal popularity.

VERSE—20.

One, who, in his heart, meditates on Thee as having an image of the moonshine (candrakanta) stone with a multitude of rays of nectar pouring out of the limbs, by mere look, subdues the pride of serpents, like the lord of birds, and cures persons afflicted by bodily diseases through his nectar-nadi (Nectar-ridden nerve.)

This verse explains a Gāruda-prayoga as an antidote for snake-poison and bodily ills. 'Nikurumbāmṛtarasaṁ' : The nectar-juice flows from the radiant rays emanating from the crystal-like lustrous body of Devi; or the rays themselves are in the form of nectar.

'Himakara śilāmūrtimiva' : Like an image or idol made of the candrakānta stone, from which nectar is constantly flowing through the lustre of the candrakānta-maṇi.

'Sarpānāṁ darpaṁ śāmayati' : By mere look, the pride of serpents is subdued The devotee becomes like Garuda, the lord of birds and in his presence serpents retreat at sight. In effect, the devotee gains the power to cure snake-poison.

'Sudhā-dhāra-sirayā' : The yogin who has successfully meditated on Devi in this form, has the nectar flowing from the Sahasrāra to the Mūlādhāra through the Suṣumnā nādī and in all the arteries of his body.

This nectar passes through his look, to the patient suffering from disease and acts as a panacea. The 'sira' or artery through which nectar flows, is the repository of the nectar 'Sudhādhārā' or the passage of the nectar. The alternative reading 'Sudhā-sāra-sirayā' indicates that the sirā is full of nectar.

Kāmeśvara Sūri states that the 'Amṛteśvarī' is contemplated in this verse and supports it by a reference to the 13th verse in the Ambhā-Stava, wherein Amṛteśvari is said to enable Her worshipper to transcend the force of time, i.e., to attain longevity. The Āryādviśati of sage Durvasas describes twenty-five ramparts encircling the Cintāmaṇigṛha, (Śrīcakra). In the Amṛtavāpikā between the twentieth and twenty-first ramparts (the manomaya and the buddhimaya ramparts) the Amṛteśvari is seen shining in a boat.

" Tadvāpikāntarāle maṇipotasīmni viharantīṁ;
Sindūrapātalāṅgīṁ sitakiraṇāṅkurakalpitavatamsām.
Pūrnenduvadanāṁ pallavaśoṇādharasphuritahāsāṁ;
Kutilakabarīṁ kuraṅgīśīśunayanāṁ kuṇḍalasphuritagaṇḍāṁ.
Nikatasthapotanilayāḥ śakti hṛayavidhṛtahema sṛṅgajalaiḥ;
Pāriṣiñcantīṁ paritastārāṁ tāruṇyagarvitāṁ vande."
(Verses 86—88)

She is also called Tārā, as she carries her devotees across the ocean of cycle of births and deaths (samsāra).

In this description, Amṛteśvarī is of pātala or pale-red colour, but the prayoga in this verse expects Devi to be thought of as crystal-white in colour. The Vāmakeśvara Tantra mentions a similar prayoga as antidote for snake poison and curing diseases through the śakti-bija—as given in the Jñānārnava :—

" Sṛṣṭisamhāraparyantām śarīre cintayet parām;
Śravat pīyūsadhārābhivarṣantīṁ viṣahāriṇīm.
Hemaprabhābhāsamānāṁ Vidyunnikarasuprabhāṁ;
Sphuracchandrakalāpūrṇāṁ, kalaśām varadābhaye;
Jñānamudrāṁca dadhatīm sākṣadamṛtarūpiṇīṁ,
Sṛṣṭisamhāraparyantām śarīre paricintayet.
Tatobhavati deveśī vainateya ivāparaḥ;
Nāganāṁ darśanādeva jadīkaraṇa kārakaḥ.
Dehīnāmamṛtasāradhīradhāradhārādharopamaḥ;
Sthirakṛtṛmaśaṅkhādiviṣopavināśanaḥ.
Duṣṭavyādhigrahānīkā dākinīrūpikāganaiḥ;
Bhūtapretapiśācādyaisstrinetra iva dṛśyate."

Similar references found in Catuśśatī may be seen in the commentaries by Lakṣmīdhara and Kāmeśvarasūri.

VERSE—21.

Great Men, meditating with their minds, cleansed of impurity and illusion, on Thy Kala comprising of the Sun, Moon and Fire, resting far above the six lotuses and the granthis, and appearing like a streak of lightning, experience exuberant transcendental bliss.

This verse prescribes the meditation on the Parā form of Devi—the Sādākhya Kalā in the Sahasrāra and describes the effect of such worship. It has been stated in verse 14 that Devi comprises of the Sun, Moon and Fire, who envelop the six cakras and derive their power and light. The internal meditative worship in the six cakras has been described in verse 9. She appears brilliant like a flash of lightning, between the eyebrows, only for a second, and rushes to the Sahasrāra for union with Sadāśiva, where she appears like lightning but steady and ever-shining. For the reason that her appearance between the eyebrows is for a second only, that cakra has been named 'Ajñā'—Ā+Jñā i.e., of little perception of Devi. 'Tapanaśaśi vaiśvānaramayīm—denotes that Devi is as effulgent as the Sun, Moon and Fire.

In other words, She is of the form of the three bindus viz., Sun, Moon and Fire. 'Api' is intended to include the three granthis also together with the six cakras over which is the seat of Devi. 'Kalā' refers to the 'Sādākhya Kalā' or 'Kāma Kalā' according to Kaivalyāśrama. 'Mahāpadmavana' is the thousand petalled lotus in the Sahasrāra. This term is used in the mantra uttered for inviting Devi from the microcosm to the image or cakra worshipped externally. According to Kaivalyāśrama the seers who meditate on the Kāmakalā experience transcendent beautitude and become Jivanmuktās. To reach this stage the aspirants must cleanse their minds of all impurities arising out of Māya or illusion. The impurities are three viz., Desire, Volition and Assumption. The yogi is to meditate on Devi along with the mantras in the eighteen seats in the Microcosm commencing from the lower Sahasrāra (Kulasahasrāra) and passing through the Mulādhāra,

the Svādhiṣṭhāna, Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddhi, Lambikāgra, the Ājñā, Bindu, Ardhacandra, Rodhinī, Nāda, Nādānta, Sakti to Vyāpikā, which is of the shape of a triangle, the letters of the mantra being thought of-one over the other in the fifteen cakras, the sound of the lower one merging with the one above. Merging the Mantra further in the Samanī, the Iśvara of three bindus, and finally meditating on the Saparārdha Kalā in the Unmanīsthana and merging the Sun in the Fire and the Fire in the Moon and the Moon in the Śaparārdha Kalā, the yogin meditates on the Śiva-Śakti and himself as identical with them. The fruit of such meditation is the realisation of his identity with the Supreme and the resultant infinite bliss.

For a detailed account of this meditation on the mantra and Devi in the microcosm, the reader is referred to the Svacchanda-sangraha and Varivasyārahasya of Śrī Bhāskararāya published by the Theosophical Publishing House and the Tamil Commentary thereon by the Srī Guhānanda Maṇdali, Madras.

VERSE—22.

When one, desirous of praying to Thee thus, 'Oh, Bhava's consort! May Thou cast Thy gracious glance on me,Thy servant,' utters the words 'Bhava's consort!', Thou, at that very moment, granteth him the state of absorption in Thy Self that is rendered lustrous by the dazzling crowns of Vishnu, Brahma and Indra.

Having explained external and internal worship (Bāhya and Ābhyantara Yagas), the path of devotion and its potency in invoking the grace of Devi is expatiated in this verse.

Bhavānī is the spouse of Bhava i.e., Śiva, the primordial Śiva tattva with which Citśakti is inseparably united - the Supreme Brahman extolled in the first verse. In this connection the following remarks found in Śivatattva Rahasya are worth remembering :—

"Bhavati astīti bhavaḥ, santi ityarthaḥ. 'Satyaṃ jñānamanantaṃ
Brahma' iti śruteḥ, yadvā asteridaṃ rūpaṃ,
Astyasmād viśvamityapādāne vā, astyasmin viśvamityadhikarane vā."

In the sense of existence i.e., Sat, the Universe evolves from 'It'; or the Universe is supported by 'It'; the Supreme which is the material and instrumental cause of the Universe, is denoted by the word 'Bhava'.

The word 'Bhavāni' in the verse is intended by the devotee as an address to the Devi in the vocative case, ('Oh, Bhava's consort!') but as a verb in the first person of the imperative mood it wound mean, 'Let me become'. As soon as the first two words 'Bhavāni tvam' are uttered by the votary, the Devi rushes to grant him 'absorption in Herself'—(Sāyujya) taking his prayer in these two words to mean 'Let me become Thyself', the same import as the Mahāvākya 'Tat Tvam Asi'-the Sāyujya which is the fruit of meditation on Devi as identical with one's self i.e., tādātmya. This mode of Upāsana leads to sucess in attaining Sāyujya much more quickly than Japa, or homa. Mukti, is of

four kinds, Sālokya, Co-existence with the Lord in His loka; Sārūpya, having the same form as the Lord; Sāmīpya, proximity to the Lord and Sāyujya-absorptīon in the Lord Himself. The first leads to the last one, which is quickly reached directly by this tādātmya upāsana, (worship). 'Mukunda Brahmendra sphuta—makuṭa nirājitapadāṁ :' When Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Indra are striving hard persistently to attain this Sāyujya but without sucess, the devotee attains it quickly by intense devotion. Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Indra are constantly prostrating before Devi and the dazzling diamonds, and other gems in their crowns appear to offer Nīrājana (waving of camphor) as it were, and render Her feet brilliant and lustrous.

This verse has been understood as illustrating the efficiency of the meditation on the Mahāvākyas which proclaim the identity of the devotee (individual soul) with the Supreme Being. Uttering Mahāvākyas unintentionally too has the potency to confer the highest Mukti. Does not fire touched even through ignorance burn the fingers ?

The Devi is extolled as 'Kṣipraprasādinī' in the Lalitā Sahasranāma. 'She bestows Her grace in this birth itself to those whose devotion is deep and intense, while one who worships Her with lesser intensity reaches the goal after three births'. (Siva Purāṇa).

The immensity, the magnanimity and the immediate character of Devi's grace is also emphasised in this verse. It is also indicated that, the path of devotion (dāsya bhakti) is a speedy means of salvation (Mukti).

VERSE—23.

Not content (in mind) with the usurpation of the left half of the body of Sambhu, the other half also, I conjecture, has been taken away by Thee, for, this Thy present form is wholly red in lustre, has three eyes, is bent with a pair of breasts, and has a crown adorned by the crescent moon.

The Bhagavatpāda, having described the grace of Devi in granting Sāyujya to the devotee in the previous verse, extols in this verse, the [illegible]e union of Śiva and Śakti. In poetic fancy, he illustrates the transformation of the Śiva-Śakti Sāmarasya (identity) from the Ardhanārīśvara form to the Devi's form. 'Śiva' 'the spouse of Śiva' appears as half of the Ardhanārīśvara (the form of half Śiva and half Śakti) has as Her distinguishing characteristics a complexion resembling the morning rising Sun, and a single breast. Śiva, as the other half has three eyes, a crown with the crescent moon and is pale-white in colour. In Her present form - that of complete union with Siva, Devi also has a crown adorned by the crescent moon, three eyes and a pair of breasts instead of one; she is wholly ruddy in complexion, all of which seem to suggest that the Devi has absorbed in Herself the right half also of Śiva, not being satisfied with her usurpation of the left half.

The Uttarakaulas view that Siva-tattva does not exist apart from the Śakti-tattva, the former being merged or included in the latter, seems to be illustrated in this verse.

'Śambhu' in this verse refers to Śiva or Brahman in whom the desire to create the Universe has arisen. The Citśakti which is distinctiy but inseparably manifest in the

same aspect has been praised in the first verse of this stotra. **Śambhu** may be interpreted as he that confers bliss, or that exists in bliss or who is Bliss Itself - an aspect not different from the Supreme Brahman as found in the lines below :—

" Śaṃ sukhaṃ yāvayati utpādayatīti Śambhuḥ.
'Śiva eko dheyayaḥ' iti śruteḥ.
Śaṁ bhavati prāpnoti ānandavānityarthaḥ.
'Ānandaṃ Brahmaṇo rūpam' iti śruteḥ.
Śaṁ san sukhasvarūpaḥ san bhavati satvāśraya iti.
'Satyaṃ jñānamanantaṃ brahmeti śruteḥ."

—(Sivatatvarahasya)

The Creatrix, the Vimarśa Śakti in iseparable union with the Śambhu, the Prakāśarūpa Brahman, has been described in the Śruti as :—

" Sāmapradhānāu samasatvau samo tayoḥ samaśaktirajarā Viśvayoniḥ."

Kālidāsa says about this unison thus :—

" Bhogyabhoktṛkaraṇobhisamkṣaye sāmarasyarasadohinī Śivā."

In this undifferentiated Śiva-Śakti-Sāmarasya, there is equality of prowess, desire, knowledge and bliss which have been described thus :—

" Parasparatapaḥ sampatphalāyitapārasparau,
Prapañcamātapitarau prāñcau jāyapati numaḥ."

Ānandagiri reads in this verse, the Siddhīparāmantra, viz., "Hrīm, Sāuṁ Hrīm, Sakala-hrīm."

VERSE—24.

Brahma creates the Universe, Hari sustains it and Rudra dissolves it. Annihilating them, Isvara conceals Himself as well. Sadasiva approves of them, pursuant to Thy command conveyed through Thy creeper-like (curved) eye-brows moved but for a moment.

In this verse, the creation and involution of the Universe is attributed to Devi Herself. Īśvara is Śuddhasattvapradhāna, but in his rājasic aspect as Brahmā, He creates the Universe. In His sattva form, Viṣṇu, protects it and in His tāmasic āspect as Rudra, He dissolves it. The Universe is reduced to its initial atomic stage, and these atoms are again involuted into their cause, the Prakṛti. By the involution of the three Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra in Īśvara, the latter also merges in Sadāsiva. This process is known as Tirodhāna or disappearance or, concealment. Sadāśiva with whom Śakti is in eternal union, is passive and motionless. When, for purposes of creation again, the desire arises in Sadāśiva through the manifestation of Citśakti. The process of creation is known as

Anugraha. Sadāśiva then creates Īśvara and Brahmā and others in turn, mainly through the powers derived from the Citśakti i.e., Devi. Thus the function of creation and involution of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśvara and Sadāśiva are carried out at the behest of Devi from whom alone their power is derived. In other words Devi performs these functions through them as Her agents and even Sadāśiva derives his power from the Devi only. Hence she is called Pancakṛtyaparāyaṇā in the Lalitā Sahasranāma stotra.

The universal feelings of 'I' and 'Mine' which obsess all beings and bind them to samsāra (the cycle of births and deaths), which constitutes bondage is caused by Devi and release from it (Mokṣa), therefore, is sought from and granted by Herself only. Tirodhāna and Anugraha also represent these conditions.

Ānandagiri traces in this verse, the Kālatripurāmantra, "Hrīm kalaha hauṁ hūṁ Sakalahrīm."

VERSE—25.

Oh Siva's consort! Worship offered at Thy feet is worship offered to the three gods born out of Thy three qualities. It is just so, because they stand perpetually near Thy jewelled seat bearing Thy feet, with their folded hands as their crest-jewels.

Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Rudra having Satva, Rajas and Tamas respectively as their predominant qualities are referred to as the three deities born out of the three qualities of Devi. Worship of Devi would therefore serve as the worship of these different deities emanating out of Her. In fact, all deities being only manifestations of Devi with individual functions or purpose, worship offered to Devi would be worship of the several manifestations also. By worshipping anyone of these manifestations one could invoke the grace of that deity. But by worshipping Devi of whom all gods are only aspects, the grace of all gods is invoked. Furthermore, these gods Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Rudra etc., are constantly in waiting at the feet of Devi with their folded hands raised above their heads ; and the raised folded hands appear like crest-jewels on their crowns. Their nearness (Sāmīpya) to Devi is the result of their constant obeisance to Devi at close quarters. The adoration of Devi also serves as the worship of these gods existing in such close proximity. Kāmeśvara Sūri reads 'api' for 'tava' and explains it as 'among other gods'. The idea is that the worship of Devi transcends the worship of Viṣṇu, Śiva etc.

From the Advaitic standpoint, the Brahman being the adhiṣṭhāna, and the other deities, being the pratibimbas, superimposed on it, the realisation of the Brahman involves their realisation as well.

Śivā means the Citśakti i.e., in eternal union with Śiva or Paramātman. The Vāyupurāṇa says :—

" Sivecchayā parāśaktiḥ śivatatvaikatāṁ gatā,
Tataḥ parisphuratyādau sarge tailaṁ tilādiva. "

The Saura Samhita has :—

" Brahmaṇaḥ abhinnaśaktistu brahmaiva khalu nāparā;
Tathāsati vṛthā proktaṃ śaktiriti avivekibhiḥ.
Śaktiśaktimatorvidvan bhedastu durghaṭaḥ. "

The Linga Purāṇa says :—

" Yathā śivastatha devī yathā devi tathā Śivaḥ;
Tasmādabhedabuddhyaiva śiveti kathayantyumāṁ."

As essentially Śivā, Devi is immensely gracious 'Śivaṁkarī' like Śiva Himself. The Sūta-Samhitā also mentions Her as identical with the Brahman and as graciously beneficent The Citśakti in the Para Brahman being 'sat' and 'ānanda' (bliss) in essence, and identical with Śiva, grants the greatest of blessings viz. release from samsāra, the cycle of births and deaths.

Ānandagiri reads the Saura Pañcadaśākṣari in this verse, thus :—

" Kaeīlahrīm, Hasakahalaḥrīm, Sakalahrīm ḥvylḥrīm sklḥrīm ".

VERSE—26.

Oh Greatly Chaste Devi! Brahma meets with death, Hari retires into passivity, Yama suffers destruction, Kubera too dies, and the line of Indras goes into slumber with eyes closed and steeped in sluggishness. Even during such a time as the great dissolution, Thy consort is sporting.

This verse speaks of the eminence and powers of Devi's chastity, as being responsible for the survival of Śiva at the time of the mahāpralaya (the final deluge) when the Manvantara (the period of activity) ceases, and when the scope for the functions of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, or even of Yama or Rudra is set at naught. Then the entire universe involutes into the Supreme Being, each of the lower tattvas (verities) merging in the higher preceding one. When all these tattvas thus get merged finally into the Śiva-Śakti union that alone continues to exist. This continued existence of Śiva even after the deluge is attributed to the potency of Devi's Chastity (pātivrattya) as indicated by the word 'Sati' in this verse, as addressing Devi. The word means—"having an eternal auspicious form which subsists for all time." 'Kināśaḥ', Lord of destruction; may refer to Yama or Rudra. 'Māhendrī vitati' — line of fourteen Manus and several Indras (whose activity ceases when the manvantara ends and deluge follows).

Kaivalyāśrama commenting on a different reading of the 3rd line of the verse (vide the different readings given under the text of the verse) says—"The expanse of the eastern quarters (directions) though wakeful goes with closed eyes into continued sleep".

The underlying idea is that the greatness of the self-luminous Śiva in everlasting union with Devi, is essentially eternal bliss which indeed is the result of undying and unsurpassed greatness of Devi, the Citśakti.

Ānandagiri interprets "Vilasati", to mean the continuous existence of the Brahman (Bliss) as the adhiṣṭhāna of the super-imposed universe at the time of its disappearance in its causal form and as its witnesser (Sākṣī). The mantra revealed and worshipped by Manu, is traced in this verse. "Haeīlaḥrīm, Hakaeīlaḥrīm, Sakaeīlaḥrīm".

According to Ramakavi, owing to the Tripurā Siddhānta being akin to the Sānkhya doctrines there is a reference to the involution of the Universe in the Mūlaprakṛti through the several stages of creation; the Universe into the elements, the elements in the tanmātras, the latter in the Buddhi through the Ahaṁkāra, and the Buddhi in the Prakṛti i.e., the Parābhaṭṭārikā. The Mahāpuruṣa, having been recognised by the Sānkhya, continues as the adhiṣṭhāna, as Sat, Cit and Ānanda.

VERSE—27.

Let my prattle be the repetition of Thy mantra, my manual work be the gestures (mudras) offered in Thy worship, my movements be Thy circumambulation, my food and drink be the oblations offered in fire (agni), my resting be prostrations to Thee, and all my actions that give comfort to me be dedication to Thee. Let all my activity be Thy worship.

In the preceding verses external worship of Devi has been expounded. In this verse the meditative internal worship of Devi is described in which all activity is dedicated to the Devi. The votaries of the Samayā path worship Devi by internal meditation of Her form in the Sahasrāra. The Samayā worship is essentially internal and mental.

The manner of worship offered by a yogin who by constant meditation has become a Jīvanmukta (one released from bondage even while living) is indicated in this verse. It follows that worship by Jīvanmuktas who meditate in solitude, consists in the contemplation of the four and six kinds of union on the Sādākhya-kalā.

This verse contains a prayer to Devi that all activities of the votary who is a manifestation of Devi Herself and not different from Her should be taken as worship offered to Her. Japa is the muttering of mantras (prayers) of Devi. And this Japa is of three modes-uttering of the mantra audibly, as audible only to one's own self, and uttering internally. Mantras are made up of letters (varṇas) which are forms of Devi. Hence all expression (speech) of varṇas or mantras constitutes Japa of Devi's mantras.

Mudrās are gestures of the hand shown in the course of external worship of Devi, being meditation on the identity of the external manifestation in the universe (created by Citśakti) with the cidānanda of the Paradevatā. These mudrās are ten in number viz.,

Sarvasaṁkṣobhinī, Sarvavidrāviṇī, Sarvākarṣiṇī, Sarvavaśaṁkarī, Sarvonmādinī, Sarvamahāṅkuśā, Sarvakhecarī, Sarvabijā, Sarva-yoni and Sarva-trikhaṇḍā (as mentioned in the comments on 'Daśamudrasamārādhyā' in the Lalitāsahasranāma). But Kāmeśvara Sūri, one of the celebrated commentators, interprets the word 'Mudrā' as the gestures inviting, fixing etc. offered in the external worship of Devi. The Mudrās being gestures of the hands, physical aetivity is accordingly to be treated as mudras to Devi. Movement of the legs such as walking is to be taken as prādakṣiṇya or circumambulation, an activity of the legs.

Homa or oblations in fire dedicating the same to the deity is a part of worship of Devi. All food and drink consumed by the body is digested by Fire (Jāṭarāgni) - presided over by Vaiśvānara-an aspect of the Citśakti.

Therefore these are oblations (āhuti) to Devi. Lying and turning about on the ground being bodily actions are equated with prostration which involves similar activity before Devi's feet.

'Saparyāparyāyaḥ'—All other bodily actions leading to personal comfort such as sleep, rest etc., are to be deemed as parts of worship. In this form of internal worship the self is identified with Devi and hence all activities and comforts are dedicated to Her as expressed in the following:—

> " Ātmano viṣayopabhogajanitasya sarvasya svātmābhedenānusandhānam saparyāparyāya iti niṣkarṣaḥ."

Thus every action of a Jivanmukta, even when he continues in mundane life, is in effect offered, to the Supreme Being, and is thought of as such by him. According to Kaivalyāśrama this verse expounds meditation on one's self as the all-pervading Devi (Parādevatās) and the Śrīcakra, as described in the Bhāvanopaniṣat. Ānandagiri reads in this verse the "Lopāmudrā vidyā", as made out from the words 'Sakalamapimudrāviracana'.— According to him 'Sakala' is the third part (kūta) of the Pañcadaśākṣarī mantra in the Vocative case addressed to Devi. Some others find the two letters of the Ajapā mantra in this verse. 'Sakalam Sukham'. The Jivātman being of the nature of bliss, the dedication of the sukha is 'Ātmanivedana' which is usually made at the end of pūja, or worship. According to the Purāṇas also, ātmanivedanam is prescribed as one of the forms of devotion (Bhakti). It may be recalled that the Bhagavatpāda has spoken of a similar "Śivātmabhāvanā" - the identification of the Self with Śiva in his 'Sivamānasikapūjā stotra, thus:—

> " Ātmātvaṃ, girijā matiḥ, prāṇāḥ, śarīraṃgṛhaṃ,
> Pūjā te viṣayopabhogaracanā nidrā samādhisthitiḥ;
> Sañcāraḥ pādayoḥ pradakṣiṇavidhiḥ stotrāṇi sarvagiraḥ,
> yadyatkarma karomi tattadakhilaṃ Śambho tavārādhanaṃ."

VERSE— 28

Oh Mother! Brahma, Indra and other celestials perish even though they have drunk nectar which confers immunity from frightful

grey hairs (old age) and death. If the longevity of Siva despite his having swallowed the terrific poison is not limited by time, it is because of the greatness of Thy ear-ornaments.

That Celestial Beings (eternals) who have drunk nectar (ambrosia), an antidote to old age and death vanish at the time of the mahāpralaya (the deluge) while Śiva who has swallowed the most virulent poison (Kālakūṭa viṣa that sprang up when the Devas and asuras churned the ocean) is endowed with longevity unlimited by time and though not eternal himself' saves others from death - as Mṛtyunjaya- is a paradox. This verse attributes it to the virtue of Devi's Tāṭaṅkās-Devi's ear-ornaments. Ear ornaments are the insignia of welfare saubhāgya of married women whose husbands are alive.

The Sun and moon are the Tāṭaṅkas adorning Devi's ears and hence they are under her aegis and control. The commencement, duration and end of Time are directed by the Sun and Moon and so are virtually controlled by Devi's Tāṭaṅkas. Thus time has no control over the Tāṭaṅkas and cannot therefore affect the longevity of Śambhu, Devi's consort.

The Pātivratya (chastity and devotion to husband) of Devi surpasses that of other goddesses and accounts for the eternity of Her saubhāgya and the inimitable nature and prowess of Śiva. Other celestials, including Lakṣmi, and Sarasvatī have an end to their welfare (Saubhāgya) at the time of deluge—while that of Devi is everlasting due to Her inseparable union with Her consort Śiva. The śruti says:—

> " Yā te rudra śivātanūḥ śivā viśvasya bheṣajī,
> Śivā rudrasya bheṣajī tayānomṛḍa jīvase ".

"Oh Rudra! That auspicious part (Sattvik peace—laden aspect) of Thy personality is elixir to the Universe, and also to Thee. Hence let it cause happiness and long life to us and Thee." Another interpretation of this mantra is—

"Oh Mṛḍa (Parameśvara)! Thy auspicious half the Citśakti is elixir for the entire creation; she is also elixir to Thee. Hence let you survive (even after swallowing the deadly poison".

That Sun and Moon adorn Devi's ears as ear-ornaments has been pointed out in the Lalitāsahasranāma also. (Tāṭaṅkayugalībhūtatapanoḍupamaṇḍalā). Ānandagiri says that this verse indicates the Śāpavimocikā mantra and is given by him as 'Aum, Hrīṃ, Āṃjuṃ saḥ'.

VERSE—29.

Glorious are the words of Thy attendants,—"Avoid the crown of Brahma in front, Thou may stumble on the hard crest of the slayer of Kaitabha; keep off the crown of Jambha's foe, when they lie prostrate (before Thee) and as Thou starteth in haste to receive Bhava (Thy consort) coming to Thy abode.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra are constantly prostrating before Devi. When Śiva enters Her abode, in great haste, Devi rises to welcome and receive Him—the devout and dutiful wife that she is. Devi's attendants warn Her against stumbling on the crests of the Gods bowing before Her. Madhu and Kaitabha, two great asuras were killed by Viṣṇu through Devi's grace. Indra is mentioned here as the foe of Jambha, another demon. This verse portrays that the great celestials are constantly prostrating before Devi for obtaining Her grace. The haste with which Devi rises to receive Bhava (Śiva) is indicative of Devi's intense affection and respect for Bhava. Śiva's having Devi for his spousē has gained for him exaltation over other Gods, a fayour obtained because of His union with Devi. Thus the verse extols Devi's over-all eminence.

VERSE—30.

Oh eternal worshipful One! What wonder is there in the mighty pralaya-fire offering camphor arati to one who constantly meditates on Thee, surrounded by the rays emanating from Thy feet (body) as Anima and others, as himself, despising the affluence of the three-eyed One?

"Nityā"—Devi, having neither a beginning nor an end (eternal one) or Devi who is in the forms of the sixteen Nityādevis. 'Niṣevye' is interpreted as worshipful one (Devi) or worshipped by the āvaraṇa devatas, such as Aṇimā etc. These Siddhi devatas, eight in number, viz., Aṇimā, Mahimā, Laghimā, Garimā, Prāpti, Prakāmya, Vāśitva, Iśitva, confer the ability to reduce oneself to invisibility, to develop, to expanse, to become light or heavy, to move at will, to enjoy according to desire, to exert influence on others and to gain absolute control. The word "deha" is taken in its secondary signification of 'feet', when the deities emanating therefrom are the deities mentioned in verse 14. The Devi from whose feet these deities have arisen could confer all these and much more. Hence one who meditates on the Devi as himself i.e., to attain tādātmya as propounded in the Mahavākyas, "Aham Brahmāsmi', 'Tat Tvamasi', 'Ayam Ātmā Brahma', becomes one with Herself i.e. attains Sāyujya directly or through Sārūpya. In this state the wealth or affluence (Saṁrddhi) of Siva too is to him a trifle. As completely identical with the eternal Devi he is not affected by the pralaya or final destruction, but continues to exist in the Brahman. The Pralaya fire propitiates him along with Śiva, offering as it were, the camphor ārati to him also, when offering it to Śivā and Śakti. This method of upāsanā known as "Ahaṁgrahopāsanā is explained by Dattātreya thus :—

" Aruṇāṁ karuṇātarangitākṣīm dhṛtapāśāṅkuśapuṣpābāṇacāpāṁ;
Aṇimādibhirāvṛtāṁ mayūkhairahamityeva vibhāvaye bhavānīṁ".

The word "Aṇimadibhiḥ", when the word 'deha' is understood as Devi's body, refers to all the āvaraṇadevatas in the Śrīcakra, who according to the Kāmakalāvilāsa are the manifestations, of Devi's body.

Trinayanasaṁrddhim : Trinayana refers to Śiva's three eyes, or to the Sun, Moon and Fire or to Iḍā, Pingalā and Suṣumnā nadies in the microcosm.

Saṁrddhi : means affluence or superiority over all other divinities who in turn-worship Śiva. The āgamas describe this affluence as evidenced in His eight forms manifest in the universe.

VERSE—31.

Having deluded the entire world with the sixty-four tantras, which are devoted to producing various siddhis relating to each, the Lord of the Jivas again brought into this world, due to Thy compulsion, this Thy tantra, which is the sole means of achieving, by itself, all the objects of human desires.

Paśupati is Śiva, the lord of paśus, or Indriyas in Jīva who is also Śiva, or the lord of the ignorant Jivās. Śivā relates to Pārvati the sixty-four tantras or spiritual disciplines, for the āchievement of several objects, each one directed towards a particular end. But moṡt of them werc not in accordance with the Vedic teachings. They are intended for that strata of society which is comprised of the lower and mixed castes (ānuloma and pratiloma), which by birth, mental and spiritual equipment and moral standards were not competent to follow the Vedic path which was exclusively for the twice-born castes. But owing to mis-apprehension, or ill-conceived selfish desires to achieve certain ends not all noble and by means often ignoble persons not clearly realising their competence, erred and had followed these tantras. The delusion attributed is not, to the all merciful Śiva but only to this latter category of aspirants. Each of these 64 tantras could confer only a single benefit, ānd some depended on other tantras also for effective usefulness. All of then aim only at artha and kama, and some involve the adoption of ignoble means as well. They do not aim at any fruit to be enjoyed in the life beyond viz., Mokṣa, contemplated in the Veda. Out of pity and a desire to save such devotees, the Devi persuaded Śivā to introduce in the world a tantra—a spiritūal discipline which without requiring recourse to any other tantra, but by itself could achieve not a single purpose but confer all the four puruṣārthas on the devotee. This is the tantra of the Devi, the Pañcadaśākṣarī, more fully explained in the next verse.

The tantras are grouped into Kaula, Miśra and Samaya categories; the two former, as already stated, do not follow the Vedic path; they involve reprehensive methods and means, as also ends in some; some are of the Kāpālika type involving wicked practices; and some follow methods known as Vāmācāra. They are therefore, not to be followed by the three higher castes.

The tantras expounding Śrīvidyā are grouped as Candrakalā vidyā and Śubhāgama. They are intendcd to confer all the goals of life and secrets of the discipline to the votary and are referred to in this verse by "akhilā puruṣārthaikaghatanā svatantraṁ". The Candrakalā vidyā is eightfold viz., Candrakalā, Jyotsnāvatī, Kalānidhi, Kulārṇava Kuleśvarī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bārhaspatya and Dūrvāsamata. Although intended for the three

twice-born castes and also to the fourth one, **in the Vāmācāra** form, it is generally believed that these are not suited to the brahmin. They follow both the Kaula and Samāyā procedures, and are therefore called **Mishrakaula** tantras,

The procedure of worship has been prescribed for the twiceborn in the pradakṣiṇa order, and for the fourth and other castes in the reverse order.

To those who follow the Vedic Path, both the Kaula Mārga (of 64 tantrās), and the Miśra - Kaulā Marga (of eight **Candrakalā** - Vidyā tantras) are not recommended. The Śubhāgama Pañcaka which follows the Vedic path and which is acceptable to the Bhagavat-pāda **was** propounded by Vāsiṣtha, Śanaka, Śuka, Sanandanā, and Sanatkumāra expounding the Samayācāra. These texts follow the Vedic cencepts and aim at Mokṣa through meditātion on the identity of the devotee (Jīva) with the deity (Brahman).

Srī Bhāskararāyā, in his commentary on the Vāmakeśvara Tantra enumerates the sixty-four tantras (with some variations) and disputes the statement that these tāntras are to be discarded. He interprets ('idam)' as pointing to the Vāmakeśvara Tantra only and not as Sri Laksmīdhara asserts it to be to the 'pancadaśākṣarī' (Thy tantra), or Jnārṇava or Tantra - rāja mentioned by others. Acyutānanda, however, avers that as the tantras were narrated by Śiva to Pārvatī, the āgamas and purānas have the same kind of authority and authenticity and the words 'te tantram' (Thy Tantra) meaning Śiva - tantra stand on a quite different footing from the sixty - four tantras having specific purposes. Ānandagiri reads the exposition of the Lopāmudrā and Kāmarāja Vidyā in this verse. According to him the world was blessed with the mātṛkas and the sixty - four kalāṣ and the essence of these, the praṇava, as the means of attaining the four purusārthas (goals) was presented in the Devi Tantra. The sixty - four tantras represented by the sixty - four Yoginīs and the mātṛkas have for their substratum Devi whose tantra is hercin propounded.

The three modes of worship described in the Subhāgama Pañcaka are known as Meruprastāra, Kailāsaprastāra and Bhūprastāra, according to which the 16 nityās are either aṅgās which are included in the Pancadaśākṣarī or as aṅgās of the Cakra-vidyā.

VERSE—32.

Oh, Mother! The letters indicative of Siva, Sakti, Kama and Kṣiti and then of Ravi, Seetakirana, Smara, Hamsa, and Sakra and thereafter of Para, Mara and Hari, conjoined with the syllable 'Hrim' at the end of each of the three groups constitute parts of Thy mantra.

Each word in the first half of the verse denotes a letter. Śiva = Ka, Śakti = E, Kāma = Ī and Kṣiti = La, and then Ravi = Ha, Śītakiraṇa = Sa, Smara = Ka, Hamsa = Ha, Śakra = La, and thereafter Parā = Sa, Māra = Ka and Hari = La. With the syllable Hrīm joined at the end of each of the above three groups the hallowed mantra of Śrī Tripura-sundarī known as 'Pañcadaśakṣarī is formed.

The first four letters of the Mantra constitute the agnikhanda, the next five form the Sūryakhanda while the last three make up the Somakhanda. The syllable Hrīm placed at

the end of each Khanda (group of letters) takes the place of the Rudra granthi between the Agnikhanda and the Sūryakhanda, of the Viṣnu Granthi between the Sūryakhanda and the Somakhanda and of the Brahma granthi above the Somakhanda and below the fourth khanda known as the Candrakalākhanda consisting of a single letter, (not mentioned here and generally very secretly vouchsafed by the preceptor to the disciple). The mātṛkā mantra of the three khandas is said to be of the nature of Soma, Sūrya and Agnī (stated in reverse order). The three khandas (groups) denote respectively—Jñāna-Śakti, Icchāśakti, and Kriyāśakti, as representing the waking, dreaming and sleeping states (avasthas) in respect of Viśva, Taijasa and Prajña forms of the Ātman with the Tamas, Rajas and Satva guṇas.

The Mantra is said to have 16 syllables represented by the 16 Nityās, the sixteenth being the Para-citkalā whose lustre envelopes the Viśuddhi Cakra of 16 petals in the form of 15 Kalās which are subsidiaries (aṅgas) of the Para-Citkalā. This Para-Kalā is a combination of the letter 'Śa' 'Ra' 'Ī' and the bindu 'm' making up 'śrīm'. According to Lakṣmīdhara, this bija, is Śrividyā. The sixteen Niityās are indicated by the sixteen letters in the mantra and are known as Candrakalās, taking the shape of the fifteen tithis (days of the fortnights) in the bright and dark halves of the lunar month. These Tithi-Nityās are worshipped by the followers of the Kaula school commencing from the Pratipat (the first day of the bright fortnight) to the 15th tithi (fullmoon day), one by one daily. They follow the reverse order in the dark fortnight. The central Tithi-Nityā-the Citkalā-is also worshipped on all days by those of the Sāmaya path. The bijākṣara 'Hrīm', at the end of each of the Khandas of the mantra, is known as Māyā-bija, or Bhuvaneśvari-bīja, and because of its great potency as Cintāmaṇi-bija.

This syllable is mentioned in the Lalitāsahasranāma as 'Lajjā' and the Devi is named 'Lajjāpadasamārādhyā' in the Lalitā-trisati. It can be seen that the three groups of the mantra are formed by the letters Ka, E, Ī, La, Ha, Sa—with 'Ka' repeated thrice (once in each group) 'La' repeated thrice (once in each group) 'Ha'—twice (in the second group itself); 'Sa' coming twice (once in the second and once in the third group) and the bīja, 'Hrīm' coming at the end of each group. The syllables 'Ka' and 'Ha' relate to Śiva and the Bijas 'E' 'Ī' and 'Sa' relate to Śakti while 'Hrīm' relates to both.

The first Khanda with Hrīm at the end known as Vāgbhavakūta has immense power in granting learning and wisdom. The second group with the termination Hrīm known as Kāmarājakūta has great potential to grant (all desires. The third khanda with the tag Hrīm is called Śakti-kūta and is capable of granting all goals of life, learning, wealth, mokṣa, sākṣatkāra etc. The mantra is held as the Sūkṣma (subtle) form of Devi. The three Khandas correspond to the three parts of the gross body-the first Khanda representing the head (up to neck), the second upto the trunk (neck to waist) and third to the lower half of the body (below the waist). Hence Devi is referred to as 'Mūlakūtatraya-kalebarā'.

The Pañcadaśākṣarī (mantra of 15 letters) commencing with 'Ka' is known as 'Kādividyā', as having been revealed to devotees such as Manmatha and the Sage Durvāsa. When begun with 'Ha' the mantra is known as 'Hādividyā' as revealed to Lopāmudrā. Most of the commentators opine that this verse expounds Kādividyā. Kaivalyāśrama,

however, finds the exposition of the Hādividyā in this verse. According to him the words n the verse relating to the first group are interpreted as follows :—

Śiva = Ha, Sākti = Sa, Kāma = Ka, Hrllekha = Hrīṁ (Bhuvaneśvari bija)—the essence of all mantras). He views all the letters in the mantra as parts or expansions of 'Hrīṁ'. He extracts from the words of the verse the mantra of 13 letters, interpreting 'atha' as without a pause and 'tadanu ca'—as meaning 'collectively' and 'Hrīṁ' joined at the end.

Lakṣmīdhara explains at great length the import of this important mantra as revealed to Kāma supporting it with Vedic texts. It is believed that initiation in this mantra is within reach of only such meritorious persons as are destined to mokṣa in this birth. Ānandagiri finds in this verse besides the mantras of 13 syllables and 15 syllables, the Ajapāmantra as well. It may be noted that some scholars are of the view that this 32nd. verse of the Saundaryalahari expounds the Kādividyā (Pancadaśikṣari) while the next verse (No 33) gives the Hādividyā.

VERSE—33.

On Eternal One! Some who are desirous of unlimited exuberant enjoyment (bliss), by placing the three bijaksharas (letters) of Smara, Yoni and Lakshmi before Thy mantra, worship Thee with rosaries made of cintamani beads and by offering hundreds of oblations of flowing Surabhi's ghee in the fire of Siva.

Placing the bījās of Smara = Klīṁ, of Yoni = Hrīṁ and of Lakṣmī- Śrīṁ, before Thy mantra, votaries desiring wealth, enjoyment or final beatitude, worship internally and perform homa (fire offering) in the Cidagni in meditation. The Samayins' worship being purely meditative, all externally adopted forms of the Kaulas are gone through internally by them. If the mantra expounded in the previous verse be 'Hādividya' (as according to Kaivalyāśrama and some others), the words 'Smaraṁ' 'Yoniṁ' and 'Lakṣhmīṁ' in this verse are to be construed as indicating the letters 'Ka', 'E', and 'Ī' respectively.

Cintāmaṇiguṇanibaddhākṣavalayā!'-means having rosaries strung witn Cintāmaṇi gems and having 'Kṣa' as meru (point) for purposes of Japa (repeating). 'Akṣavalayā' or 'Akṣamālā' denotes also garland of letters from 'A' to 'Kṣa'. Each letter repeated with the mantra (from 'a' to 'ha' and 'ha' to 'a' making up a hundred-its potency is considered to be great even as the cintāmaṇi gem has the power of granting all desires. The word 'Surabhi' may mean 'fragrant' as also 'the celestial cow-Kāmadhenu', granter of all desires. 'Śivāgnau' is interpreted as the fire or agni of the Svādhiṣṭhana cakra which is taken after purification (Śamskāra) and placed in the Baindavasthāna, in the Trikoṇa, and then brought up to the heart while Devi is transposed from the Sahasrāra to the Anāhata region where the meditative internal homa, (fire offering) is made in the cidagni or Samvidagni. Kaivalyāśrama offers an explantion of this word in keeping with Samayācāra. Devotees desiring experience of infinite bliss worship Devi in the form of the mantra in their hearts, studying the several connotations of the mantra such as Bhāvārtha,

Sampradāyārtha, Nigarbhārtha Kaulikārtha, the Rahasyārtha, and Paramarahasyārtha, and with external associations completely restrained and pour out all vāsanas (attachment or addictions due to the actions of past births) in the Purṇāhantāgni with the feeling 'Soham' (I am He).

Ānandagiri says that the word 'Smaraṁ' refers to the Kāmarājakūta of the mantra. He adds that by placing this and the Yoni and Lakṣmī before the mantra a variant ṣoḍaśī māntra could be had.

VERSE—34.

Oh glorious Devi! Thou art the body of Sambhu having the Sun and Moon as Thy breasts. I consider Thy pure frame to be Sambhu. Hence the relationship of the principal and the accessory exists in common among you both who as transcendent bliss and consciousness are equipoised.

The tenets of the Kaulas is explained in this and in the following verse. The pūrvakaula views are described herein. Devi is conceived as the body of Śiva, having the Sun and Moon as breasts. The Sun and Moon are generally treated as Devi's eyes or breasts or as Her tāṭaṅkas (ear ornaments). Ātmānaṁ. = the body; Bhagavatī = She, that is possessed of the six āiśvaryas or that knows the origin and destruction of the universe, the appearance and disappearance of the elements; Vidyā and avidyā. Navātmānaṁ = Having the nine Vyūhas as characteristics. The 9 Vyūhas are :— Kāla (Time) Kula (Colours), Nāman (Conventional name) Jñāna (Knowledge), Citta (the ahamkāra, buddhi, citta, mahat and manas), Nāda (sound made up of Parā, Paśyanti, Madhyamā, and Vaikharī), Bindu (the six cakras in the microcosm), Kalā (the letters of the alphabet) and Jīvas (those who enjoy). Similarly Devi is characterised by 9 vyūhas viz., Vamī, Jyeṣṭhā, Raudrī, Ambikā, (the four triangles in the Śricakra having their apex upwards) and Icchā, Jñāna, Kriyā, Śāntā, and Parā, (the five triangles having their apex downwards). Identical are the characteristics of Śambhu called Ānanda Bhairava, with those of Ānanda Bhairavī or Parā. In their inseparable union, transcendental bliss (Ānanda Bhairva) and consciousness (Citsakti) in one, they are said to be Samārasa When they are identical, the nine characteristics are common to both.

At the time of creation, sustenance and dissolution, though Ānandabhairava called the Parānanda and Mahābhairavī called Paracit are both active; the Devi's effort is in the fore when Parā is principal and Parānanda is accessory. After dissolution when quiessence prevails, Śakti merges with Śiva and is relegated as subsidiary to the Parānanda who is the principal. Thus relationship of the Principal and the accessory is found as a common feature in both. They are equipoised as transcendental bliss and consciousness. Since Śakti and Śiva are equal they are called Sāmaya and Samayā respectively. Their equality is said to be fivefold:—(1) Adhiṣṭhāna Sāmyaṁ (equality in position or place), (2) Anuṣṭhāna Sāmyaṁ (equality in action), (3) Avaṣthāna sāmyaṁ (equality in state such as dancing—nātya and nṛtya (4) Nāmasāmyaṁ similarity (equality in names—such as Śiva

and Śiva, Ānanda Bhairava and Ānandabhairavī etc.), (5) Rūpa Sāmyam (equality of personal features such as having three eyes, being of the same colour etc.). As both are inseparable it is difficult to say who is principal and who is accessory.

'Bhavātmānam', an alternate reading to Navātmānam, would mean the 'soul of the universe'. 'Samarasaparanāndapadayoh'—in the place of 'Samarasaparānandaparayoh' means 'in whom prowess (aiśvarya) and bliss exist'. In their perfect union, they are 'Sat' 'Cit' and 'Ānanda', shared equally by both.

According to Ānandagiri Ūrdhvāmnāya is followed in this verse indicating the bījas—SHAUM, HSAUMH.

VERSE—35.

Oh Siva's consort! Thou art Mind, Thou art Akasa (ether), Thou art Air, Thou art Fire, Thou art Water, and Thou art Earth. When Thou hath evoluted (thus), nothing else exists. Thyself intending to evolve Thine own form into that of the Universe assumeth the form of Consciousness and Bliss

In this verse the principles of the Uttarakaula path are described, which are more internal than those of the Pūrvakaulas. Some suggest that the immanence of Śakti and her creative aspect are presented herein.

The words from 'Manastvām to Bhumih' indicate evolution of the universe made up of the five elements etc. 'Pariṇātāyām' indicates that Prakṛti as cause continues to exist in the effect. The word 'hi' says that there could be no further transformation. Śakti alone subsists. According to the Uttarakaulas, creation is the activity of Śakti, the Śivatattva having merged in the Śakti-tattva. Śakti (Pradhāna) evolves itself into the gross elements and mind and during dissolution remains as the causal power. The Tāntrikas do not accept Vivartavāda. They are Pariṇāmavādins. Hence interpretation of 'Pariṇatāyām' as meaning 'Vivarta' does not hold good, although Bhagavatpāda does not accept their view. It is interesting to note that Bhāskararāya quotes this verse in his 'Setu-Bandha' in support of the Tāntric pariṇāmavāda.

The Sun and Moon, and the six aspects-mind, ether, air, fire, water and earth are the eight forms in which Devi transforms Herself into the universe. The appearance of Devi in the six cakras manifesting the six aspects has already been described in the notes under verse 8. When this evolution is complete there is nothing left besides Devi, and no further transformation (pariṇāma) remains to be processed. The author says that Devi assumes the form of Cidānanda, the essential form of the Brahman to bring about this evolution. It may be noted that the initial desire to create arises in the Brahman in this aspect of Citśakti although not differentiated from His static aspect.

According to Kaivalyāśrama the creative desire arises in the Citśakti. Śakti transforms Herself as the gross universe taking the form of Jīva as Viśva in the Virāt-Śarīra in the Jāgradavasthā (waking state), as Taijāsa in the Sūkṣma Sarīra, in the Svapnāvasthā.

(dream state) and as Prājña in the Kāraṇa Śarīra in the Suṣuptyavasthā (sleeping state) This synthesis points to the fact that the Creatrix is the Brahman of the Praṇavasvarūpa. The word 'Bhāvena' means mentally or in the mind. But when combined with 'Śivayuvati' it would mean to transform the Śiva-tattva (Cidānandākāra) as the consort of Śiva i.e., merging the Śivatattva in the Śaktitattva. In other words, the implication would be—'By reason of being Śiva's consort, Thou hath the form of Brahman viz., Cidānanda'.

Acyutānanda refers to the six worlds above the Earth presided over by six deities and the six cakras as referred to by the word 'Viśvavapusā'. Ānandagiri reads in this verse the creation of the five elements, the manifestation of their bījakṣaras and the expansion of the mantras relating to them in the six anvayas (Ṣaḍanvaya Śāmbhava), presided over by Ṣaḍanvayeśvarī.

VERSE 36.

"I bow to Parasambhunatha resting in Thy Ajna-Cakra enveloped by Paracit on the sides and having the splendour of crores of suns and moons. Having worshipped whom with devotion, one lives in the Sahasrara, the land of eternal moonshine, which is out of reach of the Sun, Moon and Fire and far beyond the ken of all and devoid of light."

In this and the snbsequent five verses, the meditation of the Para-Śiva and Cit-Śakti, the source of the Śāmbhava Mayūkhās commencing from Mānasaraśmis (rays of the mind) are extolled in the order of evolution from the subtle to the gross. Para-Śambhunātha and Cit-Parāmbā are the presiding deities, in the Ājñācakra. Tavājñācakra :—Lakṣmīdhara interprets this term as the Śiva in the four Śiva cakras between the eyebrows of the devotee and not as the two-petalled lotus. Kāmeśvara Sūri, however, holds that the word means the two-petalled lotus only, the syllable 'tava' being interpreted as 'in the manasa-tattva which is of Thy form'. Paracit is the Supreme Consciousness in close contact with the Supreme Bliss (Para-Śambhu) and is called Cit-Parāmbā. Para-Sambhunātha has the lustre of suns and moons and has the Cit-Pārāmbā on both sides according to Lakṣmidhara and Kāmeśvara Sūri but only on the left side according to Kaivalyāśrama.

The devotee meditating on the Mānasa Mayūkhās and the Paraśambhunātha and Cit-Parāmbā in the Ājñācakra reaches the blissful land of eternal moonshine. The 360 rays of the Sun, Moon and Fire in the Ānāhata, Ājñā and Mūlādhāra do not extend beyond the Ājñācakra. There is no light as commonly understood beyond the Ājñā region. The region of eternal moonshine is far away from the sight of ordinary mortals. The moonshine of this region proceeds from a full moon, always effulgent.

In verse 14, the worship of the Mayūkhas of Devi and Śivā, in the six psychic centres (cakras) has been explained. The Śiva-Śakti mithunas presiding over these centres (cakras) are praised in this and the following five verses. In this verse, Paraśambhu and Para-Cit presiding over the 64 Mānasa mayūkhās in the Ājñācakra are described.

Ānandagiri draws from this verse the Parameśvara and Parameśvarī bījas. Ravi refers to Lopāmudrā Vidyā, Śaśi to Kāmarāja-Vidyā, and Śuci to Dūrvāsa Vidyā. The essence of these Vidyās shines as the dual Parameśvara Vidyā thus—

Ājñārūpa Śakti—'Sa', Cakrastham—'au', Tapanavahni—'Ha', Śaśi—Sa, Śambhu—'Ha', Parameśvara—Parameśvara—Parameśvarī militā—two bījas Śhṣrāuṁ Āiṁ Phrāiṁ."

VERSE—37

"I worship in Thy Visuddhi Cakra, which is clear as pure crystal, Siva—the creator of Akasa—and the Devi of similar function, by whose lustre flowing in streams resembling the moon's rays, the world gets rid of its internal darkness, like the cakora bird"

The manas-tattvā in the Ājñācakra is the Ātman whence Ākāśa emanated. (Tasmād Ātmana Ākāśas sambhūtaḥ). Due to obstruction by Sun and Moon in the Idā and Pingalā and the sixteen Nityās, this region gets illuminated only by the Instre of Vyomeśvara and Vyomeśvarī, the presiding deities of the 72 Nābhasa (Ethereal) mayūkhās. The cakora bird is believed to live on moon-beams only, Similarly the devotee meditating on the Sadāśiva in the Visuddhicakra gets all darkness in his mind expelled and experiences great satisfaction.

Kaivalyāśrama has a different reading-Śivasāyujyapadavīṁ' meaning thereby the Devi that has attained blending (Sāyujya) with Śiva. The meditation on Devi as united with Śiva is contemplated. The splendour of the pair resembling the flow of moon-beams passes through the Suṣumnā and floods the entire microcosm expelling all ignorance, or the lustre reaching the Mūlādhāra removes all ills. All the world is happy like the cakora bird, being enveloped and illumined by the splendour of Vyomeśvarī. Ānandagiri extracts the Vicceśvara and Vicceśvarī mantras from this verse: "HṢPHREṀ ĀIṀ KUBJIKE, MHṢRAUṀ ĀIṀ PHREṀ".

VERSE—38.

I bow to the indescribable pair of swans which are solely relishing the honey in the blossoming lotus or wisdom (Consciousness) and are moving in the Manasa lake (Viz. the minds of great men) and from whose talk developed the eighteen-fold Vidyas, and which distinguishes all good from evil as milk from water.

The meditation on Devi in the heart region-the Anāhatacakra-in Her aspect as 'Air' is presented in this verse. Śivā and Śivā meditated in the hearts of great men (who have realised Devi in their hearts) are compared to a pāir of swans living in the mānasa lake. The greatness of the devotees consists in their desirelessness. Even as the swans relish the pollen in the lotus, the Śiva couple prefer the honey in the shape of air in their heart lotuses. The eighteen vidyās have originated from them. Even as swans can separate milk from water mixed with milk, they can sift the good discarding the undesirable things.

'Ha' is Śiva or Puruṣa: 'Sa' is Śakti or Prakṛti and 'Haṁsa' denotes the Śiva-Śakti combination. The forms in which Śiva and Śakti appear in the Anāhata Cakra are known as 'Hamseśvarī'. The eighteen (18 Vidyās are the four vedas, four upavedas and the six Vedāngas. According to Kāmēśvara Sūri, the eighteen Vidyās are the four Vedas, six Vedāngas, Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāmsā, Nyāya, Purāṇas, Dharmaśastra, Āyurveda, Dhanurvēda, Gāndharva, and Nītiśastras. The sixteen letters of the mantra together with the Vidyāguru and Devi (Vidyāsvarupiṇi) who become manifest to the devout upāsaka (devotee) in his heart, are also said to constitute the 18 vidyās.

According to yogins this pair of swans dwells in the hearts of all beings. When satva guṇa predominates in the waking state, vedas etc., are revealed. When Rajoguṇa reigns, activities such as eating follow and when Tamoguṇa is predominant, anger, sleep, fear etc. are the results. The guṇa that is appreciated is the realisation of extreme pūre conscious bliss of 'Saccidānanda Śiva' as not limited by space, time etc. Swans are traditionally credited with the ability to sepārate milk from water mixed with milk. Hamseśvarī and Hamseśvara initiate the devotee in the meaning of the Mahāvākya 'Hamsas-soham', and they are surrounded by the 54 Vāyavyamayukhās (the rays of Air).

The worship of the pair of Paramahamsas in the Anāhata Cakra is done only by a section of the followers of the Samayā path. The reading 'Sadā datte' means the approbation of the good qualities of the devotee discarding the ignoble ones.

According to Bhagavatpāda Śri Śaṅkara, Parameśvara appears in the form of a flame in union with Śakti, as a flame in a lamp. In the Subhagodaya commentary, the author prays that 'Samaya in the shape of a bright flame in union with Samayā may have their ṣole abode in the lotus of the heart.'

This verse indicates the 'Hamsamantra' which is also known as 'Ajapāmantra' being muttered through the incessant respirātion of all beings. Ānandagiri reads the Haṁseśvara-Haṁseśvarī mantra from this verse as "Haṁsa dvandvakubjikayai Vicce."

VERSE—39.

Oh Mother! I bow to the Samvarta resting in the Agnitattva in Thy Svadhisttana Cakra and also to that magnanimous Samaya, whose glance drenched with pity, renders a cooling treatment when His exceedingly furious stare burns the worlds.

The Svādhiṣṭhāna is the source of Agni (Fire) tattva, and the Divine pair is to be worshipped here as Saṁvarteśvara and Samayāmbā, with the 62 Taijasa Mayūkhās around. At the time of deluge when all the worlds are in flames, out of utmost compassion, Samaya Devi drenches and soothens them by Her gracious glance, with the desire to recreate the nniverse. Through Her rajoguna She brings back the world as before.

The order of the psychic centres, Svādhiṣṭhāna and Maṇipūra are transposed in the Śambhāvakrama. Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara follows herein the order in creation, of water from Tejas ('Agnērāpaḥ, Apdbhyāḥ Pṛthivī').

VERSE—40.

"I resort to Thy indescribable dark blue cloud, abiding for ever in Thy Manipuraka Cakra, with lightning in the form of Sakti, that shines dispelling darkness, with rainbow formed by the dazzling variegated gem-decked ornaments (of Devi) and which is showering over the worlds burnt by Hara and the Sun."

This verse speaks of Śiva as a dark cloud and Devi as a ray of lightning in the cloud. Maṇipūraka cakra is of the nature of water. According to the Āgama, the rays of the Sun above the Anāhata mixing with those of Fire in the Svādhiṣṭhāna, on entering Maṇipūraka are converted into water and the entire universe scorched by the fire of Svādhiṣṭhāna gets drenched by this water.

The Maṇipūraka region is a dark one. The light emanating from Devi dispels this darkness. Unlike the lightning that we see, Devi's lustre is eternal and so She is called 'Sthira Saudāminī'. Hence Her appearance is spoken of as controverting darkness.

To avoid the misapprehension that with such removal of darkness, Mahādeva therein would disappear, the reading "timiraparivṛtti sphuraṇayā" has been given, suggesting that the lightning encircles the darkness, keeping it visible at the same time.

The rainbow as also Devī's bow, formed of Her jewels, offered to Her (in the course of worship in the Maṇipūraka cakra) has no string. This is in accord with the Śruti quoted by Lakṣmīdhara which says that Siva's bow has no string. 'Haramihirataptaṁ' burnt by Hara (Śiva) and the Sun, or burnt by Hara in the manifesation of the twelve Ādityas (Suns), or burnt by the Sun, Hara. Another reading 'Smaramihirataptaṁ' = burnt by the fire of Kāma or desire.

The Siddha-Ghutikā according to Lakṣmīdara describes Sadāśiva present as a cloud in Maṇipūraka and Devi as lightning in the cloud. He also refers to **Taittirīya** Āraṇyaka wherein there is reference to essence of water-nectar pervading in the Sun, which is received from the Moon. The place of the Moon is the Baindavasthānā in the Sahasrāra (thousand-petalled lotus). The greatest form of nectar is the amṛta showered on the nādīs from the Sahasrāra. Lakṣmīdhara also cites the Yajur veda suggesting Śrīvidyā as the only strong ship suited to cross the ocean of births and deaths (samsāra), caused by good and bad deeds, (Karma). Śrīvidyā (worship of Devi in the six cakras), nay, the cakras themselves are strong boats (invincible by storms of bad actions) which could cross samsāra, and lead one to release from bondage.

In this Maṇipūrakacakra Megheśvara and Sthirasaudāmini with the 52 Āpya mayūkhās are to be propitiated.)

'Hara'—he who removes wisdom and leads to desires, anger, lust etc., and hence indicates ignorance (Ajñāna), which inflicts torture on beings like the Sun. Śiva showers on them the nectar of knowledge of the reality.

VERSE 41.

"I bow, in the Muladhara, to the Navatman in ecstatic male-dance (tandava) involving the nine sentiments, along with Samaya intent on female-dance (lasya). By these two coming together, out of grace and by reason of the act (purpose) of creation this world has come to have its father and mother.

Samayā is the Devi who has attained similarity or likeness with Śiva who, in turn possessing similarity with Her is known as Samaya (vide notes under verse 8). The fivefold likeness is as having the same ; (1) abode—Mūlādhāra Cakra (tatvādhāre); (ii) activity—creation (janakajananīmat); (iii) State or position : dancing (lāsyaparayāmahātāṇḍava-naṭaṁ); (iv) form : of the colour of japākusuma (Navātmanaṁ), (v) name : Samayā and Samaya. (Samayayā).

'Lāsyaparayā' = Dancing by women and men is known as 'Lāsya', and 'tāṇḍava', respectively. The lāsyam and tāṇḍavam refer to the creation of the universe.

'Navātmānam' refers to Ānanda Bhairava, with the nine Vyūhas (vide Verse 34). Padārthacandrika reads instead 'Bhavātmānaṁ' i.e., the body of Bhava, the source of creation, and inteprets 'Samayā' as 'Kālaśakti; also as Saṁ + ayayā, meaning Devi beneficially disposed.

'Ubhayamidaṁ'—animate and inanimate, static and dynamic, cause and effect, or gross and subtle forms in the Universe. Sanāthābyāṁ: of equal proweşs; or, in combination.

'Navarasaṁ' = The nine sentiments—the erotic, etc., the śṛngāra or erotic rasa, which has the greatest appeal beause of its uniqueness.

Samayāmbā and Naṭēśvara, also called Lāsyēśvari and Mahānaṭēśvara, who are worshipped in the Mūlādhāra evince a desire, after the final dissolution to create the universe, again, out of voluntary grace, and on seeing the created worlds, dance in ecstasy and for their (worlds') protection, even as parents rejoice at the birth of their children. Thus the worlds came to have their parents.

The Mūlādhāra and Svādhiṣṭhāna are regions of darkness, and are not places of worship for the Samayins, whose worship is mainly to be done mentally in the Thousand-petalled lotus (Sahasrakamala) in the head. The inner-most triangle (Trikoṇa) in the Śricakra īs the Mūlādhāra cakra and the Bindu subsists in it. To the Kaulas, however, the Trikoṇa is the Bindu and is worshipped as such externally on a base of either bhūrjapatra, metallic plate, cloth etc., or in the organ of a lovely damsel with wine, flesh, fish, etc.

mnemonically called the Pañcamakāras. The Samayin's worship, on the other hand, consists essentially in internal mental meditation of the twenty-sixth Śādākhyatattva' consisting of the union of Samaya and Samayā (aikyānusandhāna), in the disc of the moon (Citcandramaṇḍala) in the centre of the thousand-petalled lotus (Sahasrakamala).

In the preceding five verses, in which Śiva and Śakti are to be worshipped by the Samayins, the fivefold similarity have been presented. In the Maṇipūra they abide together; have the names Taḍitvān and Taḍitvatī in a state of raining and lightning and confer mukti on the devotee. In the Svādhiṣṭhāna, where they reside together, they are called by the similar names, Mahān and Mahatī, assume the form of Samvarta fire, and burning the Universe, soothen the conflagration. While residing in the Anāhatacakra, they have the name 'Hamsa' in common, have the form of a steady flame, promote the Vāyutattva and dwell in the hearts of the great. Residing in the Viśuddhicakra, the name 'Vyoma' is commonly applicable to them; their form is like clear crystal; they create Ether, and in their state resembling the moon's rays assuage the stricken world. Abiding in the Ajñācakra, their names are Para Sambhu and Para-Cit. They are worshipped by votaries with intense devotion, and confer bliss on them.

The worship is by contemplation in the head; which is the **Baindavasthāna**, also known as 'Sudhāsindhu' and 'Saraghā' (in the Veda). This meditation comprises also of the identity of (i) the psychic centres (cakras) in the microcosm and the six cakras of the Śricakra, (ii) the quadrilateral comprised of the Bindu in the Śricakra and the thousand-petalled lotus (Sahasrakamala), (iii) the Bindu and Śiva and (iv) the entire Śricakra and the Pañcadaśākṣarī mantra. The identities to be meditated on are six according to some samayins. These are; between Brindu and Nādā, Bindu and **Kalā**, **Nāda** and Bindu, Nāda and Kalā, Kalā and Bindu and Kalā and Nāda. Nāda is of four parts, Parā of the form of Trikoṇa (exclusive of Bindu), Paśyantī of the form of Aṣṭakoṇa, Madhyamā of the form of the two daśāras and the **Vaikharī** of the shape of the Caturdaśāra. The Śiva cakras viz., the two lotuses—eight and sixteen-petalled—with the mekhalas and the Bhūpura are in these Śakti-cakras. The Śrīcakra is thus implied by 'Nāda'. The six cakras commencing from the Mūlādhāra in the microcosm, are implied by 'Bindu'. The fifteen Nityas or the three hundred and sixty rays (mayūkhas) are implied by Kalā. With Her abode in the thousand petalled lotus in the head, (the Sahasradalakamala), the Devi is far above the 'Bindu', i.e., the six cakras. She transcends 'Nāda' as She is in the form of Her mantras which include the fifty syllables. The 360 kalās of the Sun, Moon and Fire, which are controlled by Time (Kāla) are merged in the fifteen Nityākalādevis. Devi shines transcendent over them ās the sixteenth "Sādākhya-kalā", also known as 'Citkalā , Candrakalā', and 'Brahmavidyā'.

Meditating on Her as above Nāda, Bindu and Kalā or with the four identities mentioned above, the votāry becomes one with Her. The preparatory course for a novitiate has been related in the notes under verse 8.

The Sankhyas hold that the mutual **sight** of Prakṛiti and Puruṣa is the cause of the universe.

According to Kaivalyāśrama, the Navātmavidyā is implied in this verse. Ānandagiri reads a suggestion in this and the preceding two verses, through the reference to three mithunas in them, of the three mantras relating to them or the Navākṣarī.

The "Flood of Bliss" (Ānandalaharī) which commences with the creationistic aspect of Śiva and Śakti in union, closes here with a fitting reference to the ecstatic dance symbolising creation by their union.

Svādhiṣṭhāna and Mūlādhāra are dark regions. Samayins have to do no worship here as their meditative worship is restricted to the Sahasrāra. But this verse, prescribes Devi worship in the Mūlādhāra in the same form as in the Sahasrāra. The Kaūlas worship the sleeping Kundalinī in the Mūlādhāra rousing Her from sleep and attain salvation as She wakes up.

Navātman = Ānanda Bhairava. The five similarities between Śiva (Samaya) and Devi (Samayā) have alrady been dealt with. The meditative form of worship of the Samayins in the Sahasrāra consists of contemplation on four identities-(1) The identity of the six cakras in the microcosm with the corresponding cakras in the Sricakrā. (2) The identity of the Sahasrāra with the Bindusthāna in the Śrickara, (3) The identity of Śiva with the Bindu, and (4) The mantra as being identical with Śricakra.

VERSE– 42.

On Daughter of the Snowy Mountain! Why will not he, who extols Thy golden diadem closely stud with the (twelve) Suns transformed into gems form the idea that the digit of the (crescent) Moon, variegated by the enveloping lustre of the inlaid gems, is but the bow of Indra (rainbow) ?

Having described the Samayā form of worship, the Bhagavatpāda proceeds to extol the Samayā, i.e., the Devi from head to feet, for the benefit of the devotee, who needs a conceivable form for purpose of meditation. In another view, the preceding 41 verses (1 to 41) having described the bliss resulting from the meditation of Devi described as in the preceding verses, the poet offers to those who have not reached the stage of spiritual advancement needed for such a meditation, a description of the transcendent beautiful form of Devi for devout contemplation commencing its description from the head. The radiant gems set densely in the crown of Devi are only the twelve Suns. Eager to remain at close quarters and worship Her, the suns have transformed themselves into gems. The radiance of the gems is reflected in the crescent moon and makes it look like the rainbow to one who is in close proximity. That one may be either Mahādeva or a devotee who by constant meditation has got near to Devi. Hence a doubt arises in the mind of the poet as, "why will not a person having worshipped Thee and being near imagine the crescent moon on Thy forehead as the rainbow or entertain a doubt whether it is the digit of the moon or the rainbow or be impressed with the superiority of the digit of the moon over the rainbow ?"

Ānandagiri reads in this verse a reference to the 'Ekākṣarī vāgīśvarī mantra'; and the 'Tithinityā mantra'—'Hrīṁ Nityaklinnē Madadrave srāhā'.

VERSE—43.

May Thy dense, greasy and soft braid of hair resembling a group of blue lotuses in bloom dispel our ignorance! Methinks, the flowers of the trees in the garden of the foe of Vala abide therein to attain their innate fragrance.

The beauty and fragrance of Devi's braid of hair is so exquisite and fascinating that it looks as if the celestlal flowers in Devi's hair-locks (offered in worship by the celestials), dwell there only to gain their sweet smell from the natural fragrance of Devi's hairlocks. In fine, the fragrance of the braid of hair transcends that of even the celestial flowers adorning the hair-locks. Flowers worn by ladies in their hair-locks are usually intended to enhance the beauty and add to their fragrance. But in the case of the celestial flowers adorning Devi's braid of hair it is the cluster of flowers that derive beauty and fragrance from Devi's hair-locks. The comparison here is of the beauty of the blue lotuses and of the fragrance of the celestial flowers to Devl's braid of hair and its fragrance but not vice versa. Though dark in hue, the braid of hair dispels darkness (ignorance) is a matter for wonder. Ānandagiri traces in this verse the Tithinityā mantra, as 'Aum Krāum Bhrāum Cchrāum Kṣrāum Svāhā'.

VERSE—44.

May the line parting the hair on Thy head looking like the path of the stream of the overflowing flood of Thy facial beauty, and bearing the red mark (of vermillion) resembling the ray of the newly rising Sun imprisoned as it were by the hosts of (powerful) enemies, namely, the darkness of the thick locks of hair, confer well-being on us.

In this and the next verse, the beauty par excellence of Devi's 'sīmanta' is described. 'Sīmanta' is the parting of the hair, (line-like parting ray) above the forehead (running upto the centre of the head in the case of female. The red vermillion mark adorning this parting line is a sign of the Saubhāgya (the happy state) of married women. The parting line itself on Devi's head manifests the transcendent splendour of Her face. Surging as it were with swelling waves, Her beauty, finds outlet in the Sīmanta. The red vermillion mark amidst the dark locks of dense hair shine like a ray of the rising sun imprisoned as it were by surrounding darkness, that of the braid of hair. The beauty of Devi's face is compared to overflowing floods. The outlet or channel through which the excess is drained is the Sīmanta or parting line of hair. The red vermillion mark is of the lustre of the ray of the rising Sun. Even as sometimes the red rising Sun is surrounded by dark clouds, the vermillion on Devi's Sīmanta is encircled by curls of dark black hair. This encircling seems as if the red ray of the sun is imprisoned by enemies viz., clouds or, the dark ketu. In some recensions the fourth line of this verse begins with the word 'Tviṣām' meaning "of lustre" instead of Dviṣām. Citing this verse in his "Kuvalayānanda", Śri Appaya Dīkṣitendra explains that while describing the Sīmanta line as the overflow of the flood of facial beauty it is the transcendence of the Devi's facial beauty that is intended to be suggested. Meditation on Devi's lovely Sīmanta as described in this verse delivers the devotee from ignorance (avidyā), protects him from enemies and vouchsafes prosperity on him. Ānandagiri reads in this verse the fifth Tithi-nityā mantra "Aum Hrīm Vaḥnivāsinyāi Namaḥ."

VERSE—45.

Thy face surrounded by the naturally curved curls of hair (on the forehead) with the lustre of the young honey-bee, scoffs at the beauty of the (mire-born) lotus. In this—Thy fragrant face with a gentle smile and pretty with the filament-like lustre of Thy teeth—revel the bees, namely the eyes of the destroyer of Cupid.

Devi's lovely face is described as mocking at the lotus flower. In other words, it excels the lotus in beauty and fragrance. The short curly hair on the forehead look like swarms of young bees attracted by the louts. Enveloped by the curly hair, Her handsome face, with a gentle smile, and the lustre of Her teeth, resembling the filaments of the lotus shines surpassing the beauty of the lotus, to such an extent that even the eyes of Śiva who resisted Cupid and reduced him to ashes are, like honey bees, attracted by the lotus of Devi's face and maddened by Her facial splendour.

The lotus is born in mire; has inferior lustre; and its beauty and fragrance are transitory. Devi's face, in contrast, is far superior by birth, lustre and permanence.

VERSE—46.

Thy forehead shines clear with the splendour of its beauty. Hence I think that the crescent moon set on Thy crown is a second one. The two, placed invertedly and joined together, (with the diameter of the one set on that of the other) would form the autumnal fullmoon, joined with the use of nectar.

The forehead of Devi, curved at the ends, shines in all its glory like a crescent moon turned downward; which creates the impression that the crescent moon placed on the crown is a second half-moon. When the two are inverted and blended together, the full moon with all its brilliance is formed. The fullness of the moon on a fullmoon-day is conceived as resulting from the blending of these halves.

Kaivālyāśrama reads 'Ubhayakalā-sandhāna' for 'Ubhayamapi-sambhūya' and 'Sudhalepspurtiḥ' for 'Sudhalepasūtiḥ'. According to him Devi's forehead shining like a crescent moon appears to be the other (second) half of the crescent on the crown. This impression follows from the circumstance that they are placed differently facing opposite directions. But, when they are reversed and blended together in proper order, the horns joined to each other, emerges the autumnal fullmoon shining with the fullness of nectar.

Ānandagiri traces in this verse, the mantra of the Tithi nityā, Śivadūtī thus: "Hrīm Śivadūtyai Namaḥ."

VERSE—47,

"Oh Uma! Ever bent on dispelling the fears of the world! I take Thy two slightly knit eye-brows to be the bow of the consort

of Rati, provided with Thy bee-like pair of eyes as the bow-string and held by the right hand with the middle concealed by the fore-arm and clenched fist covering them."

Manmatha (Cupid) is referred to as the consort of Rati. His bow comprises of flowers and the bow-string is made up of honey-bees (vide sloka 6). Devi's eye-brows, slightly bent, present the appearance of Cupid's bow and Her dark eyes extending to the ears look like the bow-string. The middle portion between the eye-brows and the nasal frame are the portions of the bow and string concealed by the fist and fore-arm of Cupid. When not in action, the bow is held only in one hand. Commentators have interpretted 'Śavya' as 'right' and 'Savyetara' as meaning 'left'. Kāmeśvara Sūri suggests that 'Savyetara' means both 'right' and 'left' hands. The Bhagavatpāda has also used 'Savya' in the sense of 'right' in the next verse. Considering the comparisons involved in the description viz., the nose resembling the form of Cupid and the closed fist as the inter-space between the eyebrows, the concealment of the bow and its string, would be possible only if it is held by the right hand. Lexicographers explain Savya divergently. In the Lalitāsahasranāma we have 'Sacāmararamāvāṇīsavyadakṣiṇasevitā'; with 'Savya' used in the sense of 'left' only.

The appellation 'Umā' is pregnant with many significations. 'U means' Mahēśvara and 'Mā' his Lakṣmī. She has a complexion resembling the yellow saffron. She is of the form of fame, and effulgence. The Kālikā Purāṇa and Padma Purāṇa describe how, when persuaded to desist from her penance by Menā, her mother, Pārvatī was addressed 'U'—'Oh', 'Mā'—'don't', and hence she came to be known as 'Uma'. According to Sūta Samhita 'U' refers to 'superior' and 'mā'. to mental activity (Uttama citta vṛtti) and 'Umā' is the essence of self-realistion. The letters comprised in the praṇava, are contained in the name 'Umā', viz., 'U' 'M' and 'A', which is therefore known as 'Devipraṇava'. Śiva Sūtra says that 'Umā' is the Icchāśakti of Yogins. The Candrakalā on the crest of Śiva is known as 'Umā'. (c.f. Bhaskararaya's commentary on Lalitāsasranāma-'Umā'). All these indicate significantly that She is the 'Vidyomārūpiṇi' 'Haimavati' 'Bahuśobhomānā' who appears before the Gods in the Kena Upaniṣad.

As stated in the Yāmala "Bhrūlatājitakandarpakārmuka vibhramām", Devi's eye-brows transcend in beauty, even Cupid's victorious bow. According to Ānandagiri, the Tithinityā Tvarita mantra, "Hrīṁ, Hūṁ Ca Kheṁ Cchem Strīṁ Kṣēṁ Hrīṁ Phaṭ" (Om, Hrīṁ Huṁ Khe Ca Cchē Kṣaḥ Strīṁ Huṁ Kṣem Hrīṁ Phat" is indicated in this śloka.

VERSE—48.

Thy right eye, being of the nature of the Sun gives birth to the day; Thy left of the nature of the Moon causes night, and Thy third eye, having the lustre of a slightly blossomed golden lotus, causes the twilights between them.

The Sun, Moon and Agnī form the three eyes of Devi ās in Śiva. The identity of Śiva and Śakti is brought out here. Further, Devi is the originating source of time, (Kāla, from days, months etc. to infinity) is eternal, and unlimited by Kāla. The transcendence of the Devi over Time is exquisitely suggested. The mantra of the Tithi-Nityā, viz., Nityā is suggested in this sloka—"Hsklrdaiṁ Hsklrdīṁ, Hsklrdāuḥ."

VERSE—49.

The glance of Thine eyes is all-victorious being all-pervasive (Visala), showering prosperity (Kalyani), clearly brilliant (Sphutaruci), invincible by blue lotuses (ayodhya) the fountain-head of the stream of mercy (Dhara), indescribably sweet (Madhura), enjoying bliss in Siva's company (Bhogavati), protector of devotees (Avanti) and excelling in expanse many a city. Hence certainly Thy glance is fit to be referred to by the respective appellations.

The grand and gracious qualities of Devi's glance are represented as indicating, (through words of double meaning), the names of famous cities.

The glances of women are classified as eight and those of Devi are most potent. The inward bloom (Viśālā) brings about excitement or emotion (Samkṣobhaṁ). Astonished sight (Kalyāṇi) results in attraction (ākarṣaṇa), dilated pupils, (Ayodhyā) produce scare (drāvaṇa); sluggish look (dhārā) creates intoxication (unmāda). A slightly swirled look (madhurā) brings about subjugation (Vasya); a friendly glance (Bhogavatī) ruins the enemy; an innocent look (avanti) causes enmity and half-closed eye (Vijayā) brings about death (māraṇa). The places at which Devi cast these glances and brought about these effects, came to be named after them. But the graces of the gracious qualities of Devi's eyes conveyed by these names are found in a surpassing measure in Devi than in those cities, which ate therefore considered to have been conquered justifying the application of these appellatīons to Devi's eyes. In other words, these cities which are excelled in expanse by Devi's eyes have come to be named after those excelling qualities of Her eyes. While these cities are encompassed and controlled by the earthy orbit (Kuvalaya) Devi's eyes, which are of the nature of Sun, Moon and Fire illuminating the Unīverse, are highly supreme and victorious. The mantra of the Tithinityā, Kulasundarī is read in this verse by Ānandagiri—"Klīṁ Āiṁ Sauḥ". ("Āiṁ Kḷīṁ Sauḥ").

VERSE—50.

The eye on Thy fore-head turns a little red, actuated by jealousy on seeing the bee-like side-glances that are eager to enjoy the nine sentiments and not leaving Thy pair of ears, that are solely delighting in the honey of the bunch of Compositions of great poets.

Deeply interested in listening to the poetic compositions of Vīṣṇu, Vyāsa, Vālmiki and other great poets, which are replete with the delicious nine sentiments, the pair of eyes of Devi reach their ends in proximity to the ears which are engrossed in enjoying the poetic compositions. While tremulously enjoying the Śṛngāra-rasa exquisitely delineated in poems, the pair of eyes resemble young bees engaged in tasting the fresh dew of flowers and seem to be reluctant to recede therefrom.

Owing to its position on the forehead, the third eye unable to participate in the relish, seems to get jealous of the other two eyes. The poet imagines that this jealousy has caused slight reddishness in that eye.

According to Ānandagiri, although the mantra is not indicated, there is a suggestion, in this verse, of the Tithinityā, Bhagamālinī.

VERSE—51.

Oh Mother! Thy glance is tender with love towards Siva, contemptuous towards other folk, wrathful towards Ganga, astonished at Girisa's (mountain-dwelling Siva's) exploits, frightened by the snakes on Hara, producing the charm of the lotus, smiling at Thy companions and full of grace towards me.

Devi's eyes manifest the sentiment of love (Śṛṅgāra) when She looks at Śiva amorously, the sentiment of disgust (bībhatsa) when looking down with contempt on all other beings, as they are not permanent, being made of flesh, bone and blood, the raudra sentiment (anger) when looking at Gaṅgā (a co-wife), with adbutarasa (wonder) when listening to the tremulous exploits of Her Lord (Śiva) such as the destruction of Tripura, the Śāntarasa (composure) when looking at the third eye on the forehead of Śiva, (which once reduced Cupid to ashes), 'bhayānakarasa (fear) when terrified on seeing the snakes adorning Hara, vīra-rasa (heroism) in excelling the charm of the lotus; Lāsya-rasa (mirth) when looking on Her attendants, and Karuṇā-rasa (compassion), when intent on bestowing Her benign grace on the devotee.

According to Indian scholars of Alaṅkara Śāstra, permanent moods or feelings of the mind (Sthāyībhāva) and transient subordinate feelings (Vyabhicāribhāvās) develop into poetic sentiments causing pleasure which is likened to the bliss on contemplation of the Brahman through concentration of the mind. These sentiments are reckoned as eight excluding Sānta (composure) which is not considered as a sentiment (rasa) at all by some authorities on Alāṅkāra who hold that Śṛṅgāra (love) is the sole rasa and others are ancillaries to it.

The specific mention of two sentiments of Śṛngāra and Karuṇa in this verse, indicate that these two sentiments are the everlasting and permanent characteristics of Devi's glance, the others being but ancillary and transient. The presence of mutually contradictory feelings in the same person, such as love and disgust, heroism and fear etc., is explained as not inappropriate, as long as the feelings relate to the object (Viṣaya) and not to the subject (aśraya) —poetic convention having followed such a mixture of opposite feelings.

The mantra of the Tithinitya, Nilapatākā, is suggested here, according to Ānandagiri —Em, Krīm, Phrem, Srīm, Krāum, Ām, Klīm, Aim, Blūm, Nityamadadravē Hum, Phrem, Hrīm".

VERSE—52.

Oh bud in the crest-chaplet of the family of the Lord of mountains! These, Thine eyes, reaching the proximity of Thy ears, with eye-lashes for feathery wings, and having as purpose the driving away of the tranquility in the mind of the Destroyer of cities, put on the charm of the arrows of Cupid, drawn upto the ear.

The beauty and potency of Devi's eyes are praised in this verse. The eyes resemble Cupids arrows, drāvaṇa being one of them. Extending upto the ear, they appear like arrows drawn up to the ears, the eyelashes looking like feathers of the arrows. Their main effect is the disturbance of the tranquility of Siva's mind. The sentiment of heroism suggested by the words 'Purāṁ bhettuḥ' and the feeling from vairāgya (detachment) are dispelled and are replaced by Śṛṅgāra through Devi's glances. The power of all the five arrows of Kāma is said to be found in woman's eye which is his sixth arrow. The potency of Devi's side-glance (Katākṣa) in producing even the impossible is suggested here.

VERSE—53.

Oh Beloved of Isana! This triad of Thy eyes decked with beauty-collyrium and displaying three colours, distinctly shine forth as if bearing the three gunas (constituents of nature)-rajas, satva and tamas, so as to create again, Brahma, Visnu, and Rudra, after they have ceased to exist.

Having described Devi's two eyes in the previous verse, all the three eyes are described together in this verse. The eyes, especially the human one, have a white ball, the dark pupil, and the red fringes at top and bottom of the eye-ball. Besides these, Devi's eyes are said to have red streaks which are usually found in the eyes of eminent personages. The qualities of Rajas, Satva and Tamas are represented by these three colours according to poetic convention. Possessed of these qualities, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra create, sustain and destroy the worlds respectively. At the time of deluge (dissolution) the trinity merge in Devi. The three colours in Her eyes seem to be the three qualities retained by Her for creating Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra again.

Lilānjana is a toilet-collyrium. Without it the dark black colour representing tamas cannot be found in the third (forehead) eye, on account of its permanent natural red hue. The other readings 'Nilāmbujatayā' and 'Nilāmbujārucā (instead of 'Lilānjanatāyā) would indicate 'Having (due to) the lustre of the blue lotus smeared distinctively.'

The mantra of Sarvamaṅgalā Tithinityā is traced in this śloka by Ānandagiri—Som Sarvamaṅgalā Svāhā (Āum Svāum)

VERSE—54.

Oh Thou, whose heart is lost in the Lord of pasus (Jivas) with Thine eyes filled with compassion, bring forth through their red,

white and blue lustre, (shades) a purificatory confluence of the rivers Sona Ganga and Yamuna, for sanctifying us.

The three colours alluded to in the previous verse, are imagined to look like the mixing of the waters of the three sacred rivers, Śoṇā, Ganga and Yamuna, the waters of which are red, white and blue respectively. Even as a bath in these rivers removes the impurities of those who bathe in them and purifies them Devi's glance obtained by initiation through the Śāmbhava Vedha dikṣā when the Devi presents, Herself before them cleanses devotees of their sins and sanctifies them. The fourteenth Tithinityā, Jivālāmālinī is traced in this verse, by Ānandagiri.

VERSE—55

Oh! Daughter of the King of mountains! The sages have said that the world gets dissolved and created with the closing and opening of Thy eyes (respectively). I conjecture that Thy eyes have dispensed with winking in order to save from dissolution this entire world which has had its origin through the opening of Thine eyes.

Like those of all celestials, Devi's eyes do not wink. Sages have said that with the closing of Devi's eyes the Universe is dissolved and with their opening it is created. After creating the worlds, it seems as if Devi has desisted from winking lest by the closing of the eyes, even for a second, the Universe should come to an end. This kind act is prompted by Her compassion for all beings.

VERSE—56.

Oh Aparna! The glittering fish (female) afraid of the slander of the tale-bearing eyes, constantly conceal themselves in water without a wink. The Goddess of Beauty (Lakshmi) abandons at dawn the blue lily whose door-like petals are closed (during daytime) and breaking through them enters it at night.

The beauty of Devi's eyes is compared to that of the eyes of the glittering female fish and that of the blue lily. The fish seem to be afraid of the jealous eyes of Devi which extending as far as the region of the ear appear as if carrying tales to Devi's ears. It is because of this that it is said that the fish recede under water constantly and always keep their eyes open without even a wink as if out of fright. A natural phenomenon is imagined here as being caused by fear from Devi's eyes. The blue lily blossoms at night and closes during day-time. The closing of the petals of the lily at daybreak is said to be caused because of the beauty (Lakshmi) leaving the lily. Again the blossoming of the flower at dusk is attributed to the return of the Lakshmi (of Beauty) to the lily flower. In another view, the goddess of Beauty (according to some Lakṣmī) resides in Devi's eyes in the day-time and in lily at the night. Aparṇā: — The word means, 'Umā' (Devi), who by

bestowing on Her devotees whatever they desire for, has no ṛṇa or debt to discharge. During her penance performed with the object of marrying Śiva, Umā fasted for long, even without eating a leaf. So She came to be known as Aparṇā.

The Kalikāpurṇa has: — Ahāre tyaktaparṇā bhūdyasmāt Himavataḥ Sutā, tena devairaparṇeti kathita prthivītale.

In the Kumāra Sambhava, Kalidāsa calls Pārvati as Aparṇa.

Karṇejapanayana: Eyes whispering in the ears; tale-bearer-eyes. The continuity of thought as expressed in the ever awake state of Devi's eyes expressed in the previous verse and the unwinking eyes of the fish being afraid of Devi's eyes as found in this verse is something abnormal. It may be noted in this context that Devi in the famous temple at Madhurai in Tamilnadu, a celebrated Śakti shrine, īs Mīnākṣī.

VERSE—57.

Oh! Auspicious One! Mayest Thou bathe me too, me who is helpless and far removed, out of Thy compassion, with Thy far-reaching look, beautiful like a slightly blossomed blue lily. Blessed will be this being by it and (at the same time) Thou wilt suffer no loss. The moon does shed its rays equally on a palace and on the wilderness.

This verse concludes the description of Devi's eyes with the prayer for Devi's beneficient glance on the supplicating devotee who unlike Brahmā and other great votaries (who by long worship have attained Devi's proximity and benign grace), has neither got near to Her nor Her gracious bounty through any special merit, but is one among the ordinary suffering humans. The prayer is that even as the Moon is impartial in shedding its brilliant nectar-like rays on palatial mansions and wild forests, the Divine Mother may in Her infinite mercy make no discrimination in bestowing Her grace on Her children.

VERSE- 58

Oh Daughter of the king of mountains! To whom will not Thy curved palis (interspace between the eyes and ears) create the curiosity of (whether it is not) the bow of the one with flower arrows? For the long side-glances cast across through them, reaching and shining in the region of the ears, create the impression of an arrow fixed (in it).

Pālis denote the curved regions between the ears and eyes of high-class ladies. Being a little curved the pāli region looks like Cupid's bow. Devi's side glance extending upto the ear looks like an arrow fixed in the bow. The form of a question used in the first half of the verse implies an affirmative answer.

VERSE—59.

I believe that this, Thy face is cupid's four-wheeled chariot, having the pair of Thy ear-ornaments (Tatankas) reflected in the expanse of Thy cheeks. Cupid, the mighty warrior sitting on it (chariot) plots revengefully against the Lord of the Pramathaganas (Siva), resting on the chariot of the Earth having the Sun and Moon for its wheels.

Sphurat = shining clearly, or having lustrous colours, tāṭaṅkā = large ear ornāment. **Sajjitavate** = who has got ready, fully equipped for battle. The alternative reading, **'asajjitavate'** = for conquering asuras, āruḥya = having mounted upon—this applies to Cupid or Śiva or both. Kaivalyāśrāma suggests the reading Ā ṛitya (meaning resorting to) so as to avoid the impropriety involved in mounting on Devi's face. The second half of the verse indicates the imaginary superiority of Cupid, an ardent devotee of Devi seated as he is on an imaginary chariot of four **wheels** —two being Devi's tāṭaṅkās and two being the reflected images of the tāṭaṅkās on Her cheeks—over Śiva who is seated in the Earth-Chariot having only two wheels, namely the Sun and the Moon.

VERSE—60

Oh Spouse of Siva! While Thou hast been drinking uninterruptedly by Thy cup-like ears, Sarasvati's melodious compositions which excel the flood of nectar in sweetness and as Thou noddeth Thy head in appreciation of their delectation, the group of Thy earrings seem to echo in response, through their tinkling sounds.

Carried away by the sweetness of Sarasvatī's compositions Devi is said to nod Her head in appreciation. Consequently, Devis' earrings make tinkling sounds. The sounds seem to echo the appreciation in response.

This interpretation does not appeal to Lakṣmīdhara. He feels that the emphasis should be on Devi and the sweetness of Her words, instead of on Sarasvatī's compositions. Other commentators hold the view that since the excellence of Devi's speech is extolled later, the purport of this verse would appear to be the eulogy of the beautiful grace of Devi's face while in an appreciative mood.

VERSE—61

Oh glorious banner of the race of the Snowy Mountain! May Thy bamboo-like nose-bone (nose-ridge) befittingly and quickly fructify our desires that nose-bone which bears within it pearls formed by Thy cool breath and out of the abundance of which a pearl is borne outside as well.

Poetic tradition recognises the existence of pearls inside the bamboo. The cool breath of Devi forms itself into many pearls in Her nostrils. Because of their abundance they are pushed out by Her breath. The pearl on the nose-ornament appears to be one of them thus thrown out. Lakṣmīdhara's reading of 'Śiśirakara' in the third line of the verse and his interpretation **thereof** as 'the breath exhaled along the left Piṅgalā nādī controlled by the moon' are quite in keeping with the pearl appearing externally on the nose-ornament worn on the left petal of the nose of women.

VERSE—62

Oh! The one with handsome teeth! I shall mention a likeness to the splendour of Thy lips that are by nature red. Let the coral creeper bear a fruit. The bimba fruit is not akin to Thy lip. Rendered reddish because of the reflection of Thy form how will it (the bimba) not be ashamed to be placed on the scales even with a fraction of Thy splendour?.

Usually the beauty of women's lips is compared to the coral creeper and the bimba fruit. Devi's lips baffle attempts at comparison because of their unparalelled beauty far excelling the coral creeper and the bimba fruit in colour and beauty. The Lalitāsahasranāma speaks of Devī as "Nav vidyumabimbaśrī-nyakkāri-radancchadā". The coral to bear a fruit is quite unnatural. If the coral creeper were to bear a fruit it may be naturally expected to be more reddish than the creeper itself. Since such a contingency is improbable the poet thinks of the alternative of the bimba fruit and discards it in as much as the red colour of the fruit is derived from the reflection of the reddishness of Devi's lips (tadbimbapratiphalana) or of the form of Devi Herself (tvadbimbapratiphalana—as in another version), or from the heat of the Sun in the right eye of Devi (drgbimbapratiphalana—as in a third version). According to the āgama all red and sweet objects in the Universe derive their splendour form Devi who is all-pervasive.

Kalayā = even by a fraction or by the fraction of one sixteenth. Having derived its lustre from Devi or her lips the splendour of the bimba fruit cannot be expected to even stand very near in comparison with Devi's lips. Hence the poet concludes that the beauty of Devi's lips is unparallelled, and Her lips are comparable only to themselves. Ānandagiri reads in this verse, the Vāktripurā mantra,—"Hrīm Aim Hrīm".

VERSE—63.

The beaks of the cakora birds get satiated by the excessive sweetness of the expanse of moon-shine, viz. the smile on Thy moon-like face Hence, longing to taste something sour they (cakora birds) drink freely every night, the waves of nectar from the Moon imagining them to be sour gruel.

The refreshing moonshine is compared to the sweet smile on Devis face. The cakora birds which are traditionally believed to live on the moon's rays have drunk the moon-shine-emanating from Devi's smile and become satiated. Because of the excessive sweetness of Devi's smile, the beaks of the birds have got benumbed. For a change to something sour, the birds turn to the moon whose splendour, compared to that of Devi's smile is like sour gruel. With no spots (Kalanka), such as the Moon has, Devi's smile

transcends the Moon in beauty and sweetness. The Parā tripurā mantra is indicated in this verse.

VERSE—64

Oh Mother! Glory to Thy tongue which possesses the lustre of the Japa-flower (Hibiscus) and which is incessantly muttering prayers by repeating Thy husband's virtues and glorious deeds! Seated on its (tongue's) tip Sarasvathi's body, of spotless white hue as of crystal stone, gets transformed into the colour of the ruby.

The glory of Devi's tongue with its beautiful ruby-like colour is extolled in this verse. The tongue is constantly muttering the glorious deeds of Siva which act speaks of devotion to Her Lord. Sarasvatī who is held to be of white as crystal in colour and who is deemed to be seated at the tip of Devi's tongue is herein said to have been transformed into the red colour of the ruby because of her contact with Devi's tongue. The esoteric significance is that Sarasvatī is resident in the tongue of Devi. The Vāksiddhi Sarasvatī mantra is indicated in this śloka (Hrīṁ Hiṁ Hrīm Sarasvatyai Namaḥ).

VERSE—65

Oh Mother! Visakha, Indra and Upendra, on their return after vanquishing the demons in battle, being indifferent to Candesvara's share in the remains of the offering made to the destroyer of the three cities; and clad in armour but with their head dress removed, eagerly set upon Thy mouthful chew of betel and slices of nut having refined pieces of camphor, white and pure as the Moon (Spat by Thee).

Tripurahara means Śiva. Viśākha, Kumara Swamin, supreme commander of the celestial forces, approaches Devi, (from whom he has acquired the śakti) to apprise Her of the conquest of the enemies. According to custom he, Indra and Upendra (Viṣnu) remove their head-dress as a mark of respect before nearing Devi's presence. They are reluctant to partake of the share of the offerings to Śiva which are solely earmarked for Candeśvara. Devi who is then chewing betels and slices of nut, in appreciation of the deeds of valour of Viśākha and others, spits a part of what She is chewing which they receive and swallow with eagerness. The extraordinary grace of Devi's mouth as also her maternal affection and the child's extraordinary prowess are suggested in this verse.—Ānandagiri suggests the mantra of Ucchista Mātangī.

VERSE—66

While Vani (Sarasvathi) is singing with the Vina about the various glorious deeds of Mahadeva (Lord of Jivas) and Thou begineth to express words of appreciation, nodding Thy head, she (Sarasvathi) quickly sheathes her Vina in its case. The sweetness on the strings of the Vina are rediculed by the soft melody of Thy eulogistic words.

Sarasvatī, the goddess of speech and learning is singing with her Vīnā, about Śiva's conquest of Tripura, His destuction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, the swallowing of the Halāhala poison, the destroyal of Jālandhara and Gajāsura and such other deeds in which Devi—the

chaste wife She is—is much interested. Devi expresses Her appreciation by a nodding of the head and words of praise. Devi's sweet voice so excells the melody of the tunings of the Vīṇā that the abashed Sarasvatī stops singing and covers the Vīṇā with the cover. The exquisite sweetness of Devi's speech and Her devotion to Her consort are brought out in this verse.

VERSE—67.

Oh Daughter of the Mountain! How shall we describe Thy incomparable chin that is touched by the forepart of the hand of the Snowy Mountain out of affection and is raised frequently by the Lord of the mountain (Girisa i.e. Siva) out of his eagerness to drink of the nectar of Thy lower lip, which is the handle, as it were, of the mirror of Thy face, held by Sambhu in his hand.

The unsurpassed beauty of Devi's chin is extolled in the Lalitāsahasranāma as "Anākalitasādṛśya-cibukaśrīvirājitā". Poets could hardly get at any suitable object that could be campared to Her chin. The handle of the mirror cited in this verse is a mere approximation. The words 'mukha mukura' used in the verse seem to suggest a reference to Kāmakalā, as found in the Kāmakalā-Vilāsa (Verse-2).

Paraśambhu in his prakāśa or static aspect is reflected in his Vimarśa' (kinetic) aspect, when the desire to create arises. From this primordial source proceeds the ideas of 'ahaṁ' (I) and 'Idaṁ' (This)—the Kāmakalā and the universe of names and forms. (cf. Kāmakalā vilāsa verses 1—8). Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara being a partial incarnation of Śiva Himself, there seems to be little impropriety in his description of the conjugal felicity of the divine parents of the universe when he speaks of 'adharapānākulatayā in the verse. Ānandagiri reads in this verse the mantra of Kulabhagavatī.

VERSE—68

This, Thy neck always thrilled by the embrace of the destroyer of the cities (Siva) displays the gracefulness of the stalk of the lotus. Thy face, since the naturally white garland of pearls below, darkened by the application of the black, and muddy agaru paste (applied to the neck), presents the charm of the fibrous root of the lotus-stalk.

Here Devi's face is compared to the lotus, Her neck to the stalk holding the lotus, and the tiny hairs standing at their ends in the neck because of the joyous emotion caused by Śiva's embrace are compared to the tiny thorns on the lotus-stalk. The white pearls in the garland worn under the neck rendered black by the agaru paste smeared in Devi's neck are compared to the black roots of the lotus-stalk in the black mire below the surface of water on which shines the lotus flower. The Kālanityāvidyā containing 20,736 nāmas is indicated here,

VERSE—69

Oh Sole expert in the musical modes, modulations and songs! The three lines on Thy neck indicating the number of strings in the auspicious cord fastened at the time of Thy wedding, shine like boundaries, delimiting the position of the three gamuts, the repositories, of the treasures of various kinds of melodius ragas (tunes).

The three line-like folds in Devi's neck which according to Sāmudrikālakṣaṇa (science relating to features of the body) are most auspicious, seem to confirm that the

three strings making up the cord (Trisara) of māngalya sūtra has been fastened in this position to stand as a guarantor confirming the debt as between debtor and creditor.

Devi is the repository of all kalās (arts) and in this verse She is addressed as the sole exponent of musicāl science in all its aspects. Gati is the musical procedure, classified into mārga and deśi, the former being initial Brahma Gita and the latter the varying procedure adopted in all parts of the country. Gamaka denotes modulations of the voice and is of five kinds; Gītaṁ is song i.e words set to music consisting of Dhātu (manner) and Mātu (matter or composition). Grāmas are musical groups being threefold— Sadjagrāmas, Madhyamagrāmas, and Gāndhāragramas, from which all rāgas or tunes have originated. The first two grāmas alone are in vogue in this world while all three are obtaining in the celestial sphere. The folds in Devi's neck seem to demarcate the boundary of the sphere of each grāma.—Ānandagiri derives the cūpamantra 'ṭhaṁ ḍham' in this verse.

VERSE—70

Afraid of the nails of the Destroyer of Antaka, because of previous experience of destruction (of a head) and hoping for the protection for the (remaining) heads, the lotus-born (Brahma) extols with his four faces (mouths) the loveliness of Thy Creeper-like arms that are soft as the lotus-stalk.

The allusion is to the plucking of one of Brahmā's five heads by Śiva when he (Brahmā) succumbed to his love towards his daughter. There is also another anecdote that Śiva clipped off one of Brahma's five heads as the latter once lied as having seen the crest of Śiva's head (an impossible task). Brahmā is afraid of losing his remaining heads through Śiva's nails. Praising the beauty of Devi's hands is capable of vouchsafing safety (because of Devi's grace) even from the intransigent ire of Śiva even as, in the world, resort to the enemy's consort's mercy brings about rapproachment with the enemy.

VERSE—71.

Oh Uma! Pray tell us, how we shall describe the brilliance of Thy hands which deride the red hue of the newly blossomed lotus, by the lustre of their nails. Well! Perhaps the lotus by some means attains similarity, to some extent, if it gets mixed with the lac-dye in the soles of Lakshmi sporting in it (the lotus).

With the paucity of objects for comparison the poet is at a loss to describe the splendour of Devi's hands. Taking an object of near similarity—the lotus—the poet says that the beauty and hue of the lotus would be somewhat akin to the beauty and colour of Devi's hands, provided the beauty of the lotus is enhanced by its contact with the lac-dye applied to the soles of Lakṣmī who is deemed to be sporting in the lotus. The reading 'Kadācit' indicates that the lotus becomes comparable only when it is in bloom but not always. The aṅkuśa mantra is suggested by Ānandagiri.

VERSE—72.

Oh Devi! May Thy pair of breasts, with ever-flowing nipples and sucked simultaneously by Skanda and Ganesa, on seeing which Heramba (Ganesa) with his mind confused by doubt, immediately touches his temples with his hand, causing amusement thereby; expel our ills.

Devi's breasts begin to flow at sight of Her children Skanda and the elephant-faced Ganesa. Ganesa struck with wonder at the magnitude of Devi's breasts, suspects if his own temples have been brought over and quickly stretches his hands to feel his temples to find out if his temples are in position. This act of Ganeśa causes amusement to his parents.

The underlying idea is that the size of Devi's breasts is comparable only to that of the temples of an elephant—in this context only to Ganesa's temples. As mother of the two highly propitious deities; Ganeśa and Kumarasvamiṇ Devi's grace is unbounded. The bāṇa mantra is read by Anandagiri herein.

VERSE—73.

Oh Banner of the Lord of Mountains! These Thy breasts are verily ruby-jars containing nectar,—not the least doubt lurks in our mind because the elephant-facad one (Ganesa) and the breaker of the Kraunca mountain (Skanda), having drunk of them (the breasts) continue to be children even till today, not having tasted the pleasure of the company of women.

Because of drinking of nectar flowing from Devi's breasts, Ganeśa and Kumāraswāmi do not age but remain eternally young. Even though they are in the company of their consorts, Siddhalakṣmī and Devasenā respectively, they are innocent of worldly conjugal pleasures but have been enjoying the supreme bliss of the Brahman. The author's initial doubt whether Devi's breasts are not bags of nectar is dispelled by the eternal youth and celibacy of Her sons, both of which are the reputed effects of tasting nectar. The bāṇa mantra is again indicated in this verse.

VERSE—74.

Oh Mother! The expanse of Thy breasts bears a creeper-like garland strung with spotless pearls taken from the temples of Gajasura and variegated in hue internally by the reflected ruddiness of Thy bimba-like lips, (thus) resmbling the fame of the conqueror of the three cities, (Siva) mingled with his valour.

Pearls are said to have their origin in the skulls of elephants, in bambooes, in the hoods of serpents, in clouds, in sea-shells, and in sugarcane. Pearls found in the skulls of elephants are generally spotted or variegated in colour—as whitish grey.

The pearls taken from Gajāsura's skull and strung into Devi's garland are whitish grey and their colour gets variegated because of the reflection of Devi's ruddy lips cast on the pearls. It is poetic convention to describe fame as of white colour and valour associated with anger as reddish. The garland of pearls of mixed colours seems to indicate the fame of Śiva—the conqueror of Tripura and his valour in overcoming Tripurāsura. It is in the fitness of things that Devi, an ideal of chastity (pativratā), should bear evidence of Her Lord's fame and prowess, on Her breasts in the form of a garland of pearls. Ānandagiri reads the Tārā mantra in disorder in this verse, the order to be learnt from the Guru.

VERSE—75.

Oh Daughter of the Mountain! Methinks the milk of Thy breasts flows as if it were an ocean of milk in the form of Sarasvati (milk of poesy) from Thy heart. The Dravida child, tasting it when bestowed by Thy gracious self, became a highly admired composer among great poets.

Milk flowing from Devi's breasts because of its white colour looks like a flow of Sarasvatī's art (the art of poesy)—Sarasvatī being white—and also like a flood of nectar from Devi's heart because of its sweetness.

There is considerable divergence of opinion regarding the identity of the 'Dravidaśiśu' (Dravida child) mentioned in this verse, among commentators and scholars. Lakshmīdhara and Kaivalyāśrama, two of the celebrated commentators, are confirmed in the view that it refers to the author of the Saundaryalaharī; Śrī Śaṅkarācārya himself. Kaivalyāśrama adds an anecdote as of the Bhagavatpāda's early life in support of his view. Child Śaṅkara is said to have made an offering of milk to Devi while doing puja in a nearby temple, in the place of his father during his absence. It seems that the child was under the impression that Devi would actually drink the milk-offering. On seeing that the milk had not been consumed he began to weep. Having pity on the young innocent worshipper, the Devi drank the milk in entirety. Finding that no milk had been left for him, as prasad, the child Śaṅkara again began to wail. Out of compassion, the Divine Mother suckled him, and immediately he began to sing exquisite poems.

An identical anecdote is furnished by Kāmeśvara Sūri and Ānandagiri while Vaidya Mādhava (author of Tātparyadipinī) holds that Dravida Śiśu is only Śaṅkarācārya. But the above anecdote does not find a place in any of the extant biographies of Bhagavatpāda.

Rāmakavi, Nrsimhasvāmin the author of the Ānandalaharī tīka and Vaidya Mādhava, four other commentators, speak of a certain child of Kāncī, left alone—the father having gone out and the mother gone to fetch water—began to cry out of hunger; that Pārvatī and Śiva who happened to go that way noticed the weeping child; and thereupon Pārvatī suckled the baby who in later years became a great poet. That baby according to them is the Dravidaśiśu of this verse. Rāma Kavi and Vaidya Mādhava give the name of the Dravidaśiśu who turned out to be a great poet in later years as Sambandhakavīśvara.

The great Ācārya of the Kāncī Pitha in one of his discourses in 1932 has said that the word 'Dravidaśiśu' of this verse probably refers to the great Tamil saint poet 'Tirujñāna Sambandar' who when still a child was suckled by Devi when the child was seen weeping on the bank of the temple tank of Sīrkāzhi, Tamilnad, where the child's father had gone to bathe. And this is the tradition obtaining about the shrine at Sīrkazhi.

An argument advanced against the view, that the word 'Dravidaśiśu' refers to the author Bhagavatpāda himself, is that it is improbable for one whose great humility is revealed in the last verse of this work would praise himself as has been done in the fourth line of this verse. However, the emphasis in this verse, is not as is sought to be made out, on the greatness of the Dravidaśisu, but the suggestion is on the potency of the grace of the Devi—as seen in the taster of Her breasts. It will be of interest to note that another small hymn, called Guhyeśvarī **Stotra** the authorship of which is attributed to the Bhagavatpāda (fouud in a manuscript in the archives of Nepal and published some years ago), also has a reference to a 'Dravida-śisu'.

The author of Sudhāvidyotinī considers 'Dravidaśisu' as refering to a Pravarasena, son of Dramidā, a prince of the Dramida country. Owing to the time of the birth of the prince being inauspicious it was believed that the child would bring ill-luck to the royal family. The child was therefore abandoned in the woods. A tiger took the child to his den. Prompted by the virtues of his previous birth, the hungry child prayed to Devi. She responded graciously by suckling him. Later the boy was rescued and restored to the throne by Devi's grace. But this claim for the authorship of Saundaryalahari has been dismissed by scholars as fantastic.

A Malayālam edition of Saundaryalaharī by Kaṇṭiyur Mahādeva Sāstrin speaks of the entire Saundaryalaharī as the composition of a siddha called Draviḍaśiśu who had inscribed the verses on the slopes of Mount Kailasa, that when Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda was reading the verses during his visit to Kailasa, Devi ordered Draviḍaśiśu to wipe off the verses and that Śaṅkara was able to memorise 41 verses before the effacing could be completed. Then Śaṅkara added 59 verses of his own and completed the work.

Ānandagiri considers that the Mahākāmakalā mantra is suggested in this verse.

VERSE—76.

Oh Daughter of the Mountain! The mind-born (Cupid) immersed himself in the deep pond of Thy navel, with his body enveloped by rows of flames issuing forth from Hara's anger. A streak of smoke emanated from it (the navel) O Mother! The world deems it to be a line of Thy fine hair.

When Cupid attempted to impassion Śiva, the latter burnt him in wrath. Cupid is here said to have sought relief from the heat of the flames caused by Śiva's anger, in Devi's navel, cool and refreshing as a lake. Smoke arising from the charred body of Cupid moving upward is considered by people to be the line of hair above Devi's navel. Navel hair is one of the fortune-bringing characteristic marks of high class ladies. The female

navel being one of the seats of infatuation for Cupid, the description that Cupid sought refuge in Devi's navel is appropriate. The description is suggestive of how Devi is the safe refuge for even those who have incurred the displeasure of Hara, the destroyer.

VERSE—77.

Oh Spouse of Siva! Oh Mother! This thing, that appears on Thy slender waist in the shape of ripples in the river Kalindi (Yamuna) seems to the wise to be the ether in between Thy pot-like breasts, compressed by their pressing one against the other (and pushed out) and as though entering the hollow in the navel.

Kaivalyāśrama feels it improper that Devi's navel should be seen by persons other than Śiva and so suggests a different reading of the last four words of the second line of the verse as '**janani tava tadgiriśe**' instead of 'tava yad bhāti sudhiyāṁ'—The additional address 'Mother' (Janani) might however indicate that to the "wise children" of the Divine Mother, the soft hair on (above) the navel seem as blue ether indistinctly, and could therefore not involve any sacrilege.

Kālindī is the river Yamunā the wāter of which is black in colour, Poetic diction gives ether the dark-blue hue like that of the sky. The fine line of navel hair of Devi, dark in colour, presents the appearance of dark ether, between Devi's breasts pushed out because of the breasts pressing against each other, and entering the deep hollow of the navel. The thin inter-space or the horizon between two mountains seen at a distance will look blue. That blue space will appear to be converging and enter some cave in-between the feet of the two mountains. This comparison is suggested in the last line of the verse. The Mohinī Tripurā mantra, Klīṁ, Strīṁ, Hrīṁ, is indicated here.

VERSE—78.

Oh Daughter of the Mountain! glory to Thy navel which may be described as a steady whirlpool of the river Ganga; the water-basin of the creeper of down having the breasts as buds; the pit of the sacrificial fire of the prowess of the flower-arrowed one; the pleasure-house of Rati and the mouth of the cave of yogic success in the eyes of Girisa (Siva).

The circular deep navel of Devi is compared to an eddy in the river Gaṅgā but unlike the latter it is steady and permanent. The line of hair above the navel presenting the picture of a creeper with the breasts appearing as buds on the creeper, the navel looks as if it were the trench of water for the creeper. The female navel being one of the sporting spots of the lord of love (Cupid), and calculated to infuse passion, Devi's navel is described as the sacrificial pit in which the prowess of Cupid personified as Fire exhibits itself. Rati, Cupid's consort finds in the navel her pleasure-abode, the navel having privacy and depth. To Śiva's eyes however, Devi's navel with its indescribable, splendrous excellence looks

like the door-way to success in his meditations which are usually carried on without interference in caverns in mountains. The word 'giriśanayanānām'—"to the eyes of giriśa"—suggests that Devi's navel does not come within the purview of eyes of others. Ānandagiri reads in this verse the Mahā Ganeśa mantra, "Aiṁ Gaṁ Gāṁ Klīṁ, Aiṁ, Hrīṁ.

VERSE—79.

Oh Daughter of the Mountain! May Thy naturally slim waist remain safe,—a waist which is in the condition of giving way under the weight of Thy breasts, which is bending in form, appearing as if on the verge of breaking down slowly at the navel and the folds, and in stability equalling the condition of a tree on a breached river bank.

A slender waist is the sign of beauty in women. It looks as though Devi's waist which is slender, is bent on account of the heaviness of Her breasts. It may break at any moment, even as a tree standing on the bank of a river which has been breached by floods, is likely to be uprooted. The poet hopes and wishes that Devi's waist should not break down, propitious as it is to devotees or due to the good fortune of Mahadeva. The Kāma Tripurā mantra "Klīṁ Hrīṁ Klīṁ Svāhā" is read in this verse by Ānandagiri.

VERSE—80.

Oh Effulgent One! Observing that Thy breasts, brilliant as gold pots, are swelling (out of passion for Mahadeva) and rending Thy bodice at the sides, perspiring suddenly and rubbing against the arm-pits; and feeling that it would suffice to save from breaking down; Thy waist has been tied, as it were, by Cupid, in three coils with the lavali creeper, namely the three folds (on the waist).

The shining folds in Devi's waist are pictured by the poet as creepers tied round the waist to protect the slender waist from break-down under the burden of Devi's breasts, which swell out of constant love for Mahādeva, so that the sides perspire and the bodice bursts.

'Lavalī' is a white creeper known as 'Kurapārēvarī, in the language of the Kānya-kubjas according to Kaivālyaśrama. Some scholars equate 'lavali' with 'Amṛtavalli' used in performing āmṛtamṛtyunjaya homa, generally performed as a prayer for longevity. The Lalita-sahasranāma has a description of the folds of Devi's waist as 'Stanabhāra namanmadhya-pattabandhavalitrayā'. Ānandagiri suggests that the Pancadasākṣarī of Kāma is suggested in this śloka viz. "Klīṁ Pancadasī Klīṁ Hamsaḥ".

VERSE—81.

Oh Daughter of the Mountain! The Lord of Mountains has presented to Thee, as dowry, heaviness and expanse cut out of his

flanks. Hence Thy stupendous hips, extensive and massy, hide this entire earth and make it light as well.

Kṣitidharapati: lord of mountains i.e. Himavān. Haraṇa: dowry given to daughter at the time of her marriage.

Among the things in the universe, heaviness and expanse could be found coexistent in the Earth alone. The extent and weight of the Earth could be surpassed only by the larger and more weighty king of mountains which support the Earth (Kṣitidharapatiḥ). The verse states that a considerable slice of the flanks of the King of the mountains (Himalaya) has been (torn and) given as dowry to Devi and that Devi's hips appear as big and massive as the flanks of the Himalayas and so expansive and weighty as to conceal and outweigh the Earth.

VERSE—82.

Oh Daughter of the Mountain! Having surpassed the lordly elephants' trunks and the multitude of golden plantain-stems, with both Thy thighs, Thou that is well-versed in Vedic lore, hast conquered (excelled) the pair of temples of the celestial elephant, by Thy beautifully rounded knees hardened as they are by prostrations to Thy Lord.

Poets generally compare a beautiful women's thigh to the elephant's trunk or the plantain stalk. But Devi's thighs transcend in beauty the trunks of the best among elephants and all plantain stumps, as the thighs are golden in colour, cool and soft. In this connection it may be noted that Kālidāsa says that the elephant's trunk and the plantain stem are beyond the pale of comparison with Pārvati's thighs inspite of their size and shape because of the hardness of the skin of the elephant's trunk and the intense chill of the plantain (Kumara Sambhava, I-36).

The reading 'Bhavati' is a an honorofic address to the Devi in the Vocative case; 'Vidhigñe': Oh! the One well-versed in vedas or in vedic injunctions i.e. omniscient. Vibudhakari: Airaāvata, Indra's elephant.

VERSE—83.

Oh Daughter of the Mountain! In order to overcome Rudra, Manmatha (the god of Love) surely has converted Thy two shanks into two quivers containing arrows doubled in number, at the ends of which are seen ten arrow-points in the guise of the nail-ends of the pair of feet, exclusively sharpened by the whet-stones, namely the crowns of celestials.

Devi's shanks and the ends of nails on Her feet are so beautiful that it seems Cupid the Lord of love used them as two quivers to hold his arrows when attempting to conquer Śiva. Devi's shanks in their splendour appear like quivers and the nail-ends as the sharp points

of the arrows encased in the quivers. Cupid is credited only with five soft arrows of flowers. The poet imagines that to ensure victory over Śivā, Cupid has doubled the number of arrows, viz. the ten foot nails of Devi. The crowns of the celestials who prostrate at Devi's feet every day are spoken of as whet-stones sharpening the arrow-points (the nails).

VERSE—84.

Oh Mother! Out of the bounty of Thy compassion, be pleased to place on my head too, these Thy two feet which the Upanisads (the crowns of the Vedas) wear as crest gem, the water washing which forms the Ganga in the hair locks of Pasupati, and the beauteous lac-dye on which feet is the crimson lustre of Hari's (Vishnu's) crest-jewel.

Śrutīnām mūrdhānaḥ = crowns of the śrutis. The vedānta or the Upanisads which describe Devi as the Universal creatrix are personified as ladies having Devi's feet as flowers on their heads. It is suggested by the reference to Gangā that the purificatory prowess of Devi's feet far transcends that of the Gaṅgā. The white gem on Viṣṇu's crown gets its crimson lustre from the lac dye on Devi's feet as and when he offers obeisance at Her feet daily. Or it may also be that the crimson hue of Viṣṇu's crest by its daily cotact with Devi's feet (at the time of prostration), causes Devi's feet to appear as dyed with lac.

Devi's feet ever dwells in the heads of Śiva, Viṣnu and all celestials and are elucidated in the upaniṣads. The poet prays that the feet may touch his head as well, capable as they are of purifying, dispelling ignorance and leading to beatitude. This prayer from the all-knowing Bhagavatpāda, is made selflessly on behalf of mute devotees like us, for the showering of Devi's grace on us.

VERSE—85.

We express our respectful salutations to Thy feet which delight our eyes, having clearly lustrous wet lac dye. The Lord of Pasus (animals) is intensely jealous of the kankeli tree, in Thy pleasure garden, which is eagerly desirous of the kicks of those feet.

The barren kankeli (aśoka) tree is said to blossom on receiving kicks from the feet of noble ladies. Śiva feels that kicks from Devi's feet are his sole privilege, (at the time of praṇaya- kalaha and should not be had even by inanimate objects like the aśoka tree. How then could men who have not acquired puṇya dream of praying at Her feet ? Having offered kāyika (bodily) obeisance the vācika (vocal) obeisance is offered now. The intense devotion of Devi to Her Lord (pātivratyā) is also manifest from the fact that Her feet even would not touch inanimate objects.

VERSE – 86.

Wnen Thy lotus-like feet struck against the fore-head of Thy husband who having feignedly (inadvertently) blundered in(calling out)

Thy name, bows in shame (embarrasment), the sounds 'kili kili' were heard being uttered through the tinkling of Thy anklets, by Thy Lord's foe (Manmatha) who thus extricated the long-standing internal rankling caused by his being burnt to ashes (by Siva).

Read with the previous verse it would appear that Śīva is eager for a kick in amorous sport, by Devi's feet. He therefore intentionally blunders calling Devi by another lady's name and in shame bows at Devi's feet. Wen Devi's foot thus comes in contact with Śiva's ferehead it appears as if it is due to a kick. The bells on Devi's anklets then create tinkling sounds of 'kili kili'. These sounds seem to proclaim the triumph of Manmatha who has been waiting for long to wreak vengeance on Śiva, the third eye of whom burnt him to ashes, and which has now received the kick from Devi's feet. If the blunder in calling by another name was due to inadvertence (mṛṣā) then Śiva bows down in embarrasment (Vāilakṣya).

VERSE—87

Oh Mother! Thy pair of feet, acclimatized to constant residence in the snowy mountain, brilliant during the night, at daybreak and also by day, constantly bestowing their grace on devotees, surpasses the lotus which is liable to blight by the fall of snow (sleeps) during night and is dependent upon Laksmi for its grace. What is strange in this ?.

While adopting the conventional comprison of Devi's feet with the lotus, the poet brings out the superiority of the former, Devi's feet constantly withstand the rigour of the mountain snow; and they are ever resplendent both by night and day. The feet are capable of always dispensing immense grace on devotees. The lotus, on the other hand, withers away in snow, blossoms only during the day, and closes at night and is charming only when Lakṣmī seeks her abode in it. By contrast the poet suggests that Devi's feet are worshipful at all times. Samayināṁ = to devotees who worship in their hearts the Ṣamayā, those who follow the Samayācāra (internal worship) The Śrībīja is indicated in this verse, says Ānandagiri.

VERSE—88.

Oh Effulgent One! How was Thy fore-foot, a seat of fame and beyond the reach of mishaps, reduced to equality with the hardened back (shell) of the tortoise? How too at the time of marriage was it (Devis foot) raised with his hands and placed on the (hard) grinding stone by the destroyer of the cities (Siva) having a heart full of sympathy ?

The words 'kīrtināṁ' and 'Vipadāṁ', may also refer to the bestowing of fame and the warding off of danger, in the case of devotees, by the grace of Devi's fore-foot. The placing of a bride's toe on a flat stone, (on which things are pounded with the help of a roller-like stone pestle), by the bridegroom, at the time of marriage, uttering the mantra which means, "Standeth Thou on this rock, and like a rock be steadfast for ever", is referred to in the second half of this verse.

The reading 'kāntīnām' instead of 'kīrtīnām' is preferred by Kaivalyāśrama, meaning 'the splendour of Devi's fore-foot'. He adds that this verse is not from Śaṅkarācārya's pen, since the verse is not found in the Malayalam texts, nor in southern manuscripts nor in traditional recensions.

VERSE—89

Oh Chandi ! Thy feet granting auspicious wealth incessantly and instantly to the indigent, laugh as it were, with their toe-nails resembling moons which cause the lotus-like hands of celestial women to close, at the celestial trees that grant the (desired) fruits to the celestials (fortunate only), through their finger-like sprouts.

Kalpataru and other celestial trees have the reputation of granting one's desires. But this benefits had only by celestials residing in Svarga and is limited by the scope of one's desires and the process of granting also is rather slow. On the other hand, Devi's grace is available to all the worlds even including the poor mortals of this earth. Further it is boundless, extending from fortune in this world to eternal bliss in the next and it is also instantaneous in action (vide verse 22). Devi's feet with the lustre of the toe-nails resembling a smile seem to laugh at and ridicule the celestial trees.

The poet conjectures that when celestial women fold their lotus - like hands (in obeisance) before Devi, their brilliance is outshone by that of the toe nails looking like many moons. In the presence of these nail-moons the lotuses (hands of celestial women) close themselves.

VERSE—90

Let my soul (me), having the (six) sense organs as feet, become a (six-footed) honey-bee, plunging deep in this, Thy foot which is always bestowing on the helpless, wealth according to their desires, scattering abundant honey in the form of a swell of beauty and which is charming like a cluster of mandara flowers.

Devi's feet are pretty and beautiful like a bunch of pretty, shining, lovely and beauteous celestial mandāra flowers which are of the all - bestowing celestial tree. The beauty is so extraordinary that the lustre scattered all rouud looks like large quantity of honey spread out from the flowers. Devi's feet vouchsafe ceaselessly wealth to the needy to their heart's content. The devotee prays that Devi's feet may dwell in his heart for ever and that he may be in incessant meditation upon them.

VERSE—91.

Oh goddess of graceful gait ! Thy household swans, as if intent on practising to balance their steps with tripping gait, do not

abandon Thy feet. So Thy lotus feet impart instruction, as it were, in the guise of the tinkling of Thy anklet embedded with brilliant gems.

The swans reared in Śiva's abode are called Kalahamsas. They closely follow Devi as She walks. But they stumble and are tripping in their gait, and seem to be keen in their endeavour to learn Devi's graceful gait. The tinkling of Devi's anklet, lustrous with the precious gems set in it appears to be imparting verbal instructions to these swans as in act of walking.

The implications of the two names of Devi, Sinjānamanimanjīra manditā Śrīpadāmbujā' and 'Marālimandagamanā' describing the tinkling of Devi's anklets and Her slow graceful gait have been exquisitely combined in this verse, presenting a picture of instruction in the act of walking to the swans.

An interpretation on the lines of Āgama is furnished by Kāmeśvara Sūri thus—'Bhavana' is the Śrīcakra; 'Kalahamsās' are adhiṣṭhātṛ devatas; 'Pada' refers to the fourteen worlds; Nyāsa means creation; krīḍa = sustenance; Paricaya = dissolution. These deities (devatas) eager to gain the power to create, sustain and dissolve the worlds, with the Hamsamantra in their minds and speech, are constantly following Devi's feet, for instruction on the nature of the Niṣkala Brahman and the jīva in activity.

According to Ānandagiri the Ātmāṣṭākṣarī mantra, 'Aum Hrīm Hamsaḥ Soham Svāhā' is indicated in this verse.

VERSE—92

Thy functionaries, Brahma, Visnu, Rudra and Isvara have become Thy cot (pillars of the cot). Siva with his clear lustre has transformed himself into an apparent bed-cover reddened by Thy reflected lustre, as the embodied erotic sentiment (Srngara rasa), and yields joy to Thy eyes.

Brahmā, Visnu, Rudra and Īśvara are persons (puruṣas), endowed with authority (adhikāra) as already referred to in verse 25. In order to be in close proximity to Devi they have transformed themselves into four legs of the cot on which Devi is seated. The mattress of the cot is formed by Sadāśiva. They are really manifestions of the Para Brahman, entrusted with definite functions such as creation, protection etc. Reference may be made to the names, (Pañcapretasamāsīnā' and 'Pañcabrahmasvarūpinī' in the Lalitāsahasranāma.

According to the Āgama, the twenty-one tattvas (verities) viz. Earth, Water, Fire Air, and Ether in their gross and subtle forms, Manas (Mind), the five Jñānendriyas (the senses of knowledge) and the five Karmendriyas (organs of action) have for their substratum in the microcosm the six cakras from Mūlādhāra to Ājñā. Above the Ājñācakra and the Brahma-granthi exists the Bhūpura with three quadrangular rampatrs, in the Sahasrāra, with four openings -one on each side- presided over from the eastern entrance onwards by Māya, Śuddha-Vidyā, Māheśvarī and Sadāśiva respectively. Suddha-Vidyā is in close affinity to and hence overshadowed by Sadāśiva; and therefore becomes identical with it.

In the Baindavasthāna in the Śrīcakra (in the centre of tae Sahasrāra also known as 'Sudhāsindhu' and 'Saraghā" Śiva and Śakti shine in perfect union.

Ānandagiri reads in this verse the Srṣtimantra thus-'Hyvrlīṁ Hayavaralaīṁ'.

VERSE—93

Curly in hair and inherently artless in smile, soft as the Sirisa flower in frame, hard like the (rocky) grinding stone in the breasts, intensely slender in the waist, expansive in the regions of the breasts and hips, the indescribable Aruna Sakti, the grace of Sambhu shines gloriously for the protection of the universe.

'Arālā keśēṣu' = crookedness is found only in the curls of hair-locks (of Devi). 'Saralā' = artless—simplicity and uprightness are noticed in Devi's pleasing gentle smile. The Śirīṣā flower is noted for its tenderness. Devi's frame (gātra) or mind (citta) is said to be very soft. 'dṛṣad' = rocky grinding-stone.

Karuṇā or mercy is generally described as being of red colour. Devi's grace manifests itself, as it were, in Her reddish frame. Aruṇa is the name of a Śakti identical with the grace of Śiva. The assumption of form by the formless Citśakti identical with Śiva is solely for the protection of the Universe. Crookedness and artlessness, slenderness and prodigiousness, softness and hardness-all pairs of opposites, found in Devi render Her indescribable by thought or word.

VERSE—94.

The dark spot (in the Moon) is musk. The moon's watery disc is the emerald container (cup), fully filled with refined camphor constituted by the Moon's digits. Hence it is true that Brahma refills again and again this cup which is emptied daily by Thy use (of its contents).

Due to similarity of the dark spot (in the Moon) to musk, of the shining Moon to an emerald cup, and the digits to bits of refined camphor, the auther conceives that the Moon is only a cup and not the Moon; it contains water scented with musk and not a dark spot; and the digits are bits of refined camphor (and not the digits of the Moon) intended for Devi's use. The waning and waxing of the Moon during the dark and bright halves of the lunar month which is reckoned as a day of the Divine Mother, are the effects of Devi's utilisation of the scented water and the replenishment of the water by Brahmā every day.

VERSE—95.

Thou art the principal Queen of the enemy of the cities. Hence the honour (privilege) of worshipping Thy feet is not easy for those whose senses are uncontrolled. Therefore it is that the celestials having Indra as their chief, have gained unequalled supernatural powers along with (or equal to those of) Anima and others abiding near Thy doorway.

Purārāteḥ = the foe of Tripurāsura that is Śiva. Saparyāmaryāda = the modes of worshipping Devi. It may also mean the honour or privilege of worshipping. 'Siddhim' = the status or the eight supernatural powers (aṇimā, mahimā, laghimā, garimā, prāpti, prākāmyaṁ, Īśitvaṁ, and vaśitvaṁ). Excluding garimā these siddhis along with three others, bhukti, prākāmya and icchā are stationed in the Bhūpura, the outer rampart of the Śrīcakra, constituting the entrance to the inner apartments of the Cintāmānigṛha. Celestials including Indra, given to sensous pleasures as they are, are deemed unfit to enter this sanctum sanctorum of Devi and so are held up at the doorway by the siddhi devis even though these celestials have derived the siddhis or supernatural powers by the grace of Devi.

This verse may suggest that the devotee in quest of self-realisation through worship of Devi meets with intermediate worldly (laukika) siddhies i.e. supernatural powers. Once he is carried away by them his progress is halted and his goal is missed. Like the siddhi devatas he has to stay at the doorway with them and he cannot reach the interior of Devi's abode viz. Mokṣa.

VERSE—96.

Oh Foremost among the chaste ! How many are the poets who do not court Brahma's wife ? Who does not become the lord of Laksmi with only some riches ? Except Mahadeva, the embrace of Thy breasts is not attainable even by the kuravaka tree.

Poets seek the favour of Sarasvatī, the Spouse of Brahmā for the sake of knowledge and gift of poesy and hence they are called 'Sarasvatī Vallabhā'. Possession of wealth earns a man the name of 'Lakṣmīpatī'. Such association (of Devi) is never found in the case of Devi. By Her chastity exemplified by Her devotion to a single lord, Mahādeva, the greatest of Gods, She shines foremost among pativratas (chaste women).

The kuravaka tree is said to blossom when embraced by a chaste lady of the superior class. But Devi's touch is not available even to inanimate beings such as the kuravaka tree which eagerly longs for it.

In contrast to the petty results to be gained by worshipping Brahmā and Viṣṇu viz. poesy and wealth, one who worships Devi attains Her by eternal sāyujya (blending) with Śiva and becomes one with Devi. This would appear to be an idea underlying the verse.

VERES—97

Oh Queen Consort of the Para-Brahman ! Those who know the Agamas call the goddess of Learning as the housewife of Brahma, call Padma as the wife of Hari and the daughter of the Mountain as the companion of Hara. Thou, the indescribable Fourth, the great Maya with Thy unfathomable, limitless transcendence deludeth the universe.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra (Hara) and their consorts, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and Pārvati are the three manifestations or Śaktis emanating from the three qualities of Rajas, Satva and Tamas for evolving, sustaining and involving the universe of animate and inanimate objects. They are created by the Supreme Brahman and they function through the power derived from Him. The unreal apparent form (Vivarta) in which the Universe is comprehended by the ignorant owing to avidyā (ignorance of the reality), according to Advaitins, is a dharma of the Brahman. These activities of avidyā, āvarṇa and vikṣepa, are attributed to Citśakti, as Mahāmāyā in this verse. Māyā is one of the verities (tattvas) recognised in the Tantra and is removed by Śuddhavidyā, knowledge of Brahman. Brahman in his kinetic aspect as Citśakti—the Supreme Creatrix of the Universe is referred to as Māhāmāyā in this verse.

The qualities of Rajas, Satva and Tamas are reflected in the microcosm in the waking, dreaming and sleeping states. In the waking state when rajas predominates the Jīva experiences pleasure and pain mixed together. In the Satva-dominated dream state, the Jīva goes through pleasure mixed with a lesser degree of pain. And in the tamasridden sleeping state pleasure not unmingled with some pain is experienced. It is only in the fourth (Turīya) state the Jīva experiences unalloyed bliss—ĀNANDAM—which is his essential state.

The form in which Devi manifests Herself as Mahāmāyā i.e. the fourth One is beyond the reach of speech and thought ("Yatō vācō nivartante aprāpya manasā saha"). The three qualities, appearing in the Divine Trinity revolve (bhrāmayasi), as it were the Jīva through waking, dreaming and sleeping states again and again. When the Jīva reaches the fourth state there is cessation of and freedom from worldly experiences. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa relates how this Mahāmāyā, with immense power, deludes even the minds of the learned (jñānis) through ignorance. She is the cause of samsāra, the cycle of births and deaths and human bondage, and as the supreme wisdom She is also the sole reliever from bondage. Girām devīm = goddess of learning, Sarasvatī. Adritanayām = daughter of the mountain, Pārvatī.

The reader may peruse the lecture of His Holiness Śri Śaṅkarācārya Swamin of Kāmakotī Pītha, on 'Kāmeśvarī' delivered in 1957-58 (published by Kalaimagal Office -Madras-4, in their publication, 'Golden Treasury of Ācārya's Lectures) for an inimitable and detailed exposition of this verse.

VERSE—98.

Oh Mother ! Tell me when shall I, seeking knowledge, drink the water cleansing Thy feet (padodakam-water used for ablutions of the feet) which (water) is mixed with the juice of red lac and which resembles the juice of chewed betel (Pansupari or tambula) of the lotus-like mouth of Sarasvati with the innate characteristic of being the cause for poesy in even the dumb.

Kadākāle = at what time form birth to death. Ālaktakarasa = the juice of red lac used by by ladies to annoint their lips and feet. The water with which Devi's feet are washed gets reddened by contact with the lac-dye in Her feet. It resembles the colour of the juice of chewed betels and nut-slices spitten by Sarasvatī whose mouth

is described as being akin to a lotus. Not only is the water from Devi's feet alike in colour and fragrance to the tāmbūla-rasa but also in conferring ability to compose mellifluous and delicious poetry. Poets look like Sarasvatī in masculine form.

Great poets like Kālidāsa and Mūkakavi are reputed to have tasted the chewed betel which Devi spat and consequently gained mastery in poesy. Lakṣmīdhara refers to a tradition, according to which the Bhagavatpāda placed his hand on the heads of certain born deaf mutes and enabled them to recite the Laghu and Carcā stotras. Devi pleased with them pouréd into their mouths water that had cleansed Her feet. Similar grant of feet-ablution water is prayed for in this verse.

This specific prayer for the water with which ablution is offered to Devi's feet, is in keeping with Samayā form of worship in the Sahasrāra. In the Kaula form Devi is worshipped as Kuṇḍalinī in the form of a serpent in incessant slumber, in the crevice of the Mūlādhārā and so there is no scope for offering ablutions with water to the feet.

The prayer for the water offered to the feet is in effect a prayer for sāmīpya mukti or liberation under which the devotee lives near Devi.

VERSE—99.

Thy worshipper lives with Sarasvati and Lakshmi as a rival to Brahma and Visnu and with a handsome personality shatters Rati's devotion to her lord. Endowed with long life with his association with the Jiva, and his ignorance cast away, he enjoys the sweetness of what is known as Supreme Bliss.

The fruits of worshipping Devi-hapiness in this world of the highest order leading eventually to final beautitude—are indicated in this verse.

Worship of Devi confers on the devotee vast and varied learning, knowledge and poesy, as also fabulous wealth. Thereby he becomes famous as 'Vākpati' and 'Lakṣmīpati', whereof he becomes the object of jealousy of Brahmā and Visnu. The devotee is also endowed with a lovely and handsome form which to Rati's eye excels Manmatha's personality in beauty so much as to falter in her love to her lord. Not only does the devotee attain objects of earthly pleasure but to him a long life is also ensured, during which he realises his self and enjoys supreme Bliss as a Jīvanmukta. Paśu the Jīva, the witnesser of external objects constituted by the five elements is bound by them, as if it were encompassed by ignorance of his own self. Devi's grace got by constant meditation of Her, enables the devotee to get out of this overpowering ignorance, to disassociate himself from the external world and to discover his own reality. Then he realises his identity with Sadāśiva, merges in Him and is delivered from the cycle of births and deaths. The jīvanmukta continues in his mortal frame even after self-realisation because of lingering vāsanas and samskāras.

The magnitude of the benefits of meditation on Devi and Her consequent grace on the devotee already related in the third verse, Avidyānām etc. is reiterated here. The attaining of the four-fold goals or purusārthas—dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa—all in this life itself through meditation on Devi is emphasised in this verse. Learning (indicated by Sarasvatyā in the verse) is essential for realisation of Dharma. The second purusārtha,

artha, is achieved by earning wealth (pointed out by the word 'Lakṣmyā), the third Kāma is attained by having a good personality (signfiied by the words 'Ramyana Vapuṣā) and mokṣa, the fourth goal, being, indicated by the term 'Parānanda.'

When one gets over pāśas (bonds) which bind him to this mundane existence (bonds such as jealousy, fear, doubt, disgust, lineage, custom etc.) he attains the state of Parānanda i.e. Brahmānanda the finale of the several states of happiness described in the śruti commencing from the ordinary joy experienced by the human being (mānuṣa ānanda) to the Supreme Bliss or Brahmānanda. This verse is in the nature of phalaśruti indicating the fruit of worship or meditation of Devi, including Kaivalya, all in this life itself.

According to Ānandagiri the Paśupāśavimocaka mantra is indicated in this verse viz. "āṁ juṁ saḥ kuṁ tuṁ saṁ paśupāśaṁ phaṭ".

VERSE—100

Oh Mother of Speech! Like unto the waving (in adoration) of the flames of lamps before the Sun, like offering unto the Moon (as-oblation of water) the drops of water got from the moonstone, and similar to satisfying the ocean (by offering) to it, its own water, is this Thy praise (hymn or stotra), in words that have emanated from Thee.

In the concluding verse of his hymn in praise of Devi, Bhagavatpāda Saṅkara submits in all humility that the verses comprising the hymn are solely Devi's gifts and are Her own expression.

Devi, as Parā manifests as Paśyanti and Madhyamā and eventually appears in the Vāikharī stage as mātṛkas—the letters of the alphabet 'a' to 'Kṣa'. Sounds, letters, words and mantras made up of these matrkas are not different from the Devi. The Bhagavatpāda himself describes letters and sounds as the embodiment of Dēvi, (cf. Tripurasundari-Vēdapādastava-"Akārādi Kṣakārānta Varṇāvayavaśālinī". This hymn therefore comprises of Devi Herself, She being the praiser, the praise and the praised. The effort of the author is likened to actions in life having similar bearing. While worshipping the Sun, camphor in blaze is waved in adoration before the effulgent Sun. Agni is considered as entering the Sun at day-time and the Sun as entering Agni during night. Hence the flame of camphor waved before the Sun derives its light from the Sun (the worshipped one) and is not different from the Sun's light. Another instance is the drops of water caused to be emitted from the moonstone by the Moon's rays, being offered to the Moon. Similar is the pouring of sea-water as oblation into the sea after a sacred bath in the sea. In all these examples the offering is derived from the deity to whom the offering is made and besides not being different from the deity is comparatively *infinitesimal*. Such is this hymn, according to the Bhagavatpāda.

Śri Śankara, the omniscient sayant, dedicating this wonderful string of verses to the Divine mother declares that this hymn is not his work but only that of Devi. While impressing on devotees the immanence of Devi in speech and action, the author has thus set to the world a noble example of extreme humility that should be the mental attitude of a true devotee and the real mark of genuine devotion and deep knowledge

The inquisitive reader may in this connection peruse with benefit the Kañcī Acāryal's lecture on the "Humble Preceptor". (Golden Treasury of Acāryā's Lectures 1957-58, Kalaimakal office, Madras-4)

VERSE 101

The Sun having attained the lustre of a crystal mirror and having become mild with his rows of rays, softened for fear of scorching the face, bears the reflection of Thy face, as if it were his heart-lotus, ever in bloom and fearless of the moon.

[*N.B.* This verse and the two following are considered to be interpolations by Lakṣmīdhara and some other scholars, but in most of the northern recensions of the work, these three verses find a place.] The sun becomes a mirror suited to reflect Devi's feet only. But yet by Her grace and his own constant meditation on Her; he has gained the fitness to reflect Her face.

VERSE—102

Those who are Thy devout worshippers, having been cleansed of their impurities, who with a body shining like a Kadamba tree, with well developed, swelling breasts, with a charming smile and a fascinating side-glance create in Hara, the wrong impression that they are Thyself. Oh Uma ! This is their final fulfilment.

One who worships Devi as described in this verse attains a form similar to Hers (Sārūpya) and Hara is misled to believe the devotee to be Devi Herself. Constant meditation transfers the devotee into the divine state. The potency of this upāsana is elucidated in this verse.

VERSE—103

Oh Treasure ! Ever-smiling one ! Possessor of infinite auspicious qualities ! Expert in dispensing justice ! Thou of limitless knowledge ! Resident solely in persons whose minds are well-controlled ! Thou free from conventins and restraints and Thou eternal ! Thou whose feet are praised by all the upanisads ! Pray hallow also this, my hymn of praise.

To the ardent devotee Devi is a treasure-trove, bestowing inconceivable benefits. Looking to ever with a beneficent smile, assuming several forms, possessing numerous, auspicious qualities, being an expert in assessing the degrees of the merit of upāsanā (worship) for dispensing fruits thereof, and treating all alike, She finds a place in the minds of persons who have succeeded in controlling the senses. Not being different from the Supreme, Devi is unrestrained and transcendent.

To the meditative yogin She is the Cit-śakti, the kinetic energy of the Brahman eulogised as the purport of the Upanisads. To the common worshiper She is an ocean of mercy, ever-beneficent and infinite in Her grace and generosity. She bestows affection on those who follow the righteous path, She knows the minds of devotees. Resting always in the hearts of those who observe their religious duties, She grants their desires. The saint author prays thus—"Oh! the Eternal one called Nityā, the Nigamas expound Thee. This my hymn of praise too is devoted to Thy praise. Hence it deserves to be simiiarly rendered equal to them.

SAUNDARYA-LAHARI

PRAYOGA OF SAUNDARYA-LAHARI VERSES (in English)

The 100 verses of Saundarya-lahari are deemed as a panacea for all human ills and also as vouchsafing desired objects. The mode of practical application of the verses (prayoga) in accordance with the desired effects has been prescribed in many prayoga texts available in different parts of our land such as Bengal, Kerala, Tamilnad etc. The prayoga given in this section has been drawn on a careful study of the different texts. Wherever there is variance regarding the number of times of recital of the particular verse or the number of days of worship, the difference is noted within brackets. The worship as prescribed is to be done each day as also recital of prescribed times.

N. B. No originality is claimed for the facts published in this prayoga section. The prayoga should be handled only by those who possess the deserving qualifications and after getting instructions from preceptors or Srividya upasakas. In preceding pages the figure of yantra for each verse, together with a picture opposite to it depicting the pose of Devi as described in the particular verse (numbered 1, 2 etc.) has been printed. The pictures are from the paintings available in the shape of manuscript with the Government Museum, Baroda.

VERSE 1:—Yantra on gold plate—Recital 1001 (1000) times daily, facing East, for 12 days—Archana—Lalithasahasranama with Japakusuma (Sembaratta) or other red flowers; offerings of cooked rice, scrappings of cocoanut kernel mixed with powdered jaggery and ghee; effects:—all prosperity, granting of cherished purposes and solution of intricate problems.

VERSE 2:—Yantra on gold plate—Recital 1000 times, facing North, for 45 (55 or 12) days; Archana—Lalithathrisathi with virmilion, offerings:—sweet milk gruel, cocoanuts and fruits; effects:—gaining vast influence over others and fascination of those around.

VERSE 3:—Yantra on gold plate—Recital 2000 times (1008), facing North-East, for 45 (54, 15) days. Archana—Lalithathrisathi with white flowers such as jasmine, mallika etc, offerings:—cooked rice, cakes of black-gram pulse, honey and betels with slices of arica nut; effects:—obtaining of versatile knowledge, particularly of Vedas.

VERSE 4:—Yantra on gold or silver plate—Recital 3000 (1000) times for 36 (40, 16) days, facing North-East (according to some texts East), Archana-Lalithasahasranama with vermilion, offerings:—Rice cooked with green-gram pulse, cooked rice mixed with juice of lemons, bits of sugar cane, and milk, effects:—cures diseases, freedom from fear and poverty, possession of vast estates.